



GAME OF THE YEAR
VOTING FORM INSIDE

COMMANDOS + URBAN ASSAULT STRATEGY GUIDES

THE AUSTRALIAN
PC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE



PC PowerPlay



**MAG
OF THE
YEAR**

MOTOCROSS MADNESS

ANTI-GRAVITY GAMING

VIDEO CARD BENCHTEST

Riva TNT vs. G200 vs. 3Dfx Banshee

ONLINE GAMING

Complete Beginner's Guide

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS

COLIN McRAE RALLY

JOHNNY HERBERT'S GP

RAINBOW 6

INSIDE LOOK! TOMB RAIDER 3

LARA'S THIRD COMING



PREY • CARMAGEDDON 2

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by
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What we're playing: Colin McRae

Rally, Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix,

Grand Prix Legends, Motocross

Madness, Starcraft, Half-life, FIFA

98, European Air War, Sin, Exxtreme

Lawn Croquet 3D

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Enough with the hardware - back to the games!



We have the power. Whether we can actually afford it or not, CPUs, 3D accelerators and 3D sound cards have unleashed some mighty gaming power, and we cannot

complain. But, it's time to shift the focus back to what's really important - the point of it all, our reason for being; the games!

Yes, Game X may have full-screen anti-aliasing, trilinear filtering and utilise all the power of the captured alien 3D games technology we have only recently begun to understand - but is it actually fun to play? For more than half an hour? Probably not... It'll look a treat though. *Sigh*.

It all reached a shamelessly low-ebb with totally gorgeous yet totally boring games like Incoming. Creating a game purely as a technological showpiece is taking it all in completely the wrong direction. Developers now possess the expertise gained from the couple of years it took for 3D to find its way and stabilize to a common platform, and now they have no excuse. Probably the most common theme in the letters we get from you is the lack of originality in games. Now is the time, the turning point. Sure, we'll cry and jump up and down if a new game isn't drop dead gorgeous, but if it doesn't cut it in the gameplay dept. then by golly we'll be mad.

Driving games are a beautiful example. The 3D will be very nice indeed, that's a given, but these sort of games need the right feel to make them worthy. Just about



every driving game of the past two years has relied almost entirely on graphics, the driving physics of the last batch of driving sims has been extremely weak. Now though, we're blessed with driving sims that get both bits right. Look through the reviews in this issue, the golden age of driving games is upon us and this quality is rearing it's lovely head through other genres too.

We're gamers as well as worshippers of technology, like you probably are, but while the exciting technology ride of the past couple of years has been fascinating and sometimes unbelievable, it's the quality of the gaming experience that really matters. After a short, bleak period of sameness and lameness in games, it's now looking like the year ahead will be one of the greatest ever.

Hopefully...

Ben Mansill
Editor

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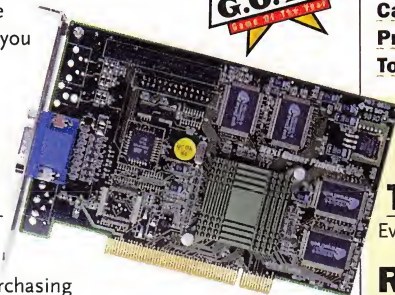
Your vote could change PC gaming forever. Or perhaps it won't, but there's only one GOTY and you'd hate yourself forever if you didn't vote.



HOTWARE

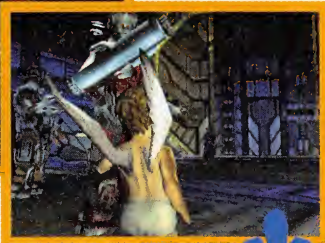
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Microsoft®



Meet the Microsoft® Sidewinder™ Force Feedback Wheel and the Force Feedback Pro joystick. Feel the force of every game action in the palm of your hand, thanks to a colossal 16 bit, 25 MHz

processor. And with Game Controller Software you can program buttons to the actions in the games. Did we mention you can use them with over eighty games? Buckle up. You're in for a bumpy ride.

Microsoft Urban Assault™ comes free with the Force Feedback Pro.
Microsoft Monster Truck Madness™ 2 and Microsoft CART Precision Racing™ come free

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MIC22249PCP

...THE WHEEL RATTLE IN YOUR HANDS
AS YOU CRUSH ROCKS WITH YOUR
MONSTER TYRES

...THE JOYSTICK SNAP WITH THE
IMPACT OF A ROCKET RIPPING
INTO YOUR TANK

...THE INTOXICATING POWER OF
BEING TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY
IMMERSED IN THE ACTION



Force Feedback Wheel



Force Feedback Pro Joystick

with the Wheel.

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CD GUIDE

The demo CD that loves you back.

CD #30

Starting the PC PowerPlay CD

Welcome to the latest PC PowerPlay CD Interface. Insert the CD into the CDROM drive and click on the RUNME file to start. The menu is easy to use. Simply click on the option you want, whether it's Games, Utilities or Patches and another menu will appear. Browse through the menu options and click on the program you want to install. It's pretty straightforward so you shouldn't have any problems.



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Faulty CDs will be replaced free of charge. Send it, together with a description of the error, to:

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The Games

Another month, another quality CD ROM jam-packed with the latest demos and shareware. Simply browse through the menus and select the program you want to use. The program will either run from the CD, or will be installed to your harddrive depending on what options are available. Here's a rundown on what's on this month's Cover CD.

BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT PRO BOWLING

Publisher: THQ

Category: Sports

\GAMES\BRUN\BOWLING.EXE

The most realistic bowling simulation available. Brunswick Circuit Pro features realistic graphics, individual character personalities, tournaments, state-of-the-art equipment and family fun. Grab your favourite bowling shoes and roll a few balls down the aisle.

Requirements: Pentium 90, 16

MB RAM, SVGA

3D: Direct X, software

FALLOUT 2

Interplay

Preview

\GAMES\FALL2\FALLOUT2.EXE

This is a trailer to the up and coming Fallout 2 game from Interplay. Taking place 50 years after the original, you play an ancestor of the first game's hero, who was unceremoniously thrown out of the vault for spending too much time amongst the radioactive fallout. In the fullgame you must locate the "Garden of Eden Construction Kit" which the town needs desperately in order to survive.

Requirements: Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM, SVGA



Rainbow Six

Red Storm

Strategy [Real Time]

\GAMES\RSIX\SETUP.EXE

Rainbow Six is a classic Clancy-style story where you lead an elite multinational task force battling international terrorism in highly realistic settings. Game play is organized around a series of missions in which you must plan and execute precise assaults on terrorist installations. As your mission advances, you will uncover a larger and more sinister conspiracy, where the fate of the world hangs in the balance.

Requirements: Pentium 166, 32 MB RAM, SVGA

3D: D3D

EVIL CORE

ABTS Intelligence Group

3D Shooter

\GAMES\EVIL\EVILCORE.EXE

The N'Leth and the Bloblics have joined forces to try and figure out what is evil lurks in the hidden Fallen Cities. You have been selected to be the first to explore and report from this unknown area. Your mission is to scout out the deeper tunnels and report back. Be careful and watch your back.

Requirements: Pentium 133, 16 MB RAM, 3Dfx
3D: D3D, software

CAESAR III

Sierra

Strategy

\GAMES\CAESAR\CAESAR3.EXE

Caesar III casts you as a trainee governor at the very start of the ancient Roman Empire. Your success will lead to promotion and personal financial gains, and could help expand the empire itself. Ultimately, your goal is to rise all the way to becoming Caesar, Emperor of Rome.

Requirements: Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM, SVGA

GALACTIC PATROL

Monkey Byte

Scrolling Shoot-em-up

\GAMES\GPATROL\GPATROL.EXE

Galactic Patrol is a new 3D homage to the classic arcade hits of the early 80's. The look and spirit of such legendary games as Space Invaders, Galaga, Phoenix, and Galaxian pulse through 25 levels in over 300 waves of shoot 'em up fun. Reflex-burning top view action, frenzied side scrolling, and comin' right at ya' rear views are all here in this retro-styled alien invasion.

Requirements: Pentium 133, 16 MB RAM, SVGA

Keyboard Controls

Arrow keys control ship movement

Space Bar Fires primary weapon

TAB Cycles secondary weapon

Control Fires secondary weapon

R toggles targeting reticles on and off

Mouse controls ship movement

Left Button Fires primary weapon

Right Button Fires secondary weapon



CARMAGEDDON 2

Carmageddon 2

SCI

Strategy

\GAMES\CARMA2\SETUP.EXE

Max is back... madder and badder than ever in the latest in the Carmageddon series. You return once again to spin, slip and slide through pedestrians, cows and opponents as you race through incredible tracks. The first Carmageddon was based on manic driving, this time round Max Damage is clinically insane. Buckle Up!

Requirements: Pentium 166, 32

MB RAM, 3Dfx optional

3D: D3D, Glide, software

Keyboard Controls.

Keypad 8 Accelerate

Keypad 2 Brake/reverse

Keypad 4 Turn Left

Keypad 6 Turn Right

Spacebar Handbrake

Z Wheelspin (useful for getting out of tight situations)

Backspace Repair (double-tap repairs fully)

Insert Recover (for when you

land on your roof)

Tab Map View Toggle on/off

Delete Buy Armour

End Buy Power

Page Down Buy Offensive

Cursor Keys Camera Control

(left + right to centre camera)

C Cockpit View toggle on/off

(cursor keys can move the camera over the bonnet)

T Target lock toggle on/off

Y Target cycle (changes the locked opponent)

H Horn (scares pedestrians)

Ctrl + Q Quit Game



Grand Prix Legends

Sierra Sports

Driving Simulation

\GAMES\GPL\GPLDEMO.EXE

You can resurrect the glory days of Grand Prix racing in Papyrus' upcoming release, Grand Prix Legends. GPL puts you in the driver's seat of history's most famous race cars on some of the greatest tracks in the world. Race a BRM against Dan Gurney at Zandvoort, or take Jochen Rindt one on one around Monza's flats in your Lotus 49. Expect heart-stopping and white-knuckled action.

Requirements: Pentium 166, 16 MB RAM, SVGA 2MB, 3Dfx optional
3D: D3D, Glide, software



MOTOCROSS MADNESS

Microsoft

Racing

\GAMES\MSM\MSMCM.EXE

Motocross Madness is a stunt driving and racing game that captures the daredevil spirit of world-class supercross racing. Motocross Madness is the first motorcycle racing game that features separate driver/bike physics models. This allows for superior gameplay (because it gives gamers more control over their racing and stunts) and the

most fun you can have on two wheels!

Requirements: Pentium 166, 16 MB RAM, SVGA 2MB, 3D: D3D, Glide

Keyboard Controls

Accelerate UP ARROW

Brake DOWN ARROW

Steer Left LEFT ARROW

Steer Right RIGHT ARROW

Lean Forward W

Lean Back S

(Combine buttons for stunts)



HEADRUSH

Sierra
Trivia

\GAMES\HR\HEADRUSH.EXE
Take You Don't Know Jack's fantastic gaming format, add some snazzy animations, replace the Brady Bunch with the Simpsons, and you've got HeadRush, Berkeley Systems' first trivia game geared for teenagers. In this fast-paced, funny party game, up to three players compete to answer questions about everything from religion to raves.
Requirements: Pentium 75, 16 MB RAM, SVGA

JAZZ

JACKRABBIT 2

Epic Megagames
Platform

\GAMES\JAZZ\JAZZ2SWC.EXE
Join Jazz and his spaced-out brother Spaz in their quest to stop the nefarious turtle Devan Shell from traveling back in time and turning history on its ear. This Shareware version of Jazz Jackrabbit 2 contains 3 single player levels, 2 multiplayer games, and a limited number of secrets and weapons.
Requirements: Pentium 133, 32 MB RAM, SVGA

LODE RUNNER 2

Sierra
Platform

\games\lr2\LR2Demo.exe
Sequel to the long forgotten arcade relic called Lode Runner. Players take on the role of a Runner traveling through an isometric gameworld, collecting gold, solving puzzles, and evading the creatures who dwell in it. Like the original game, the update will require a nerve-wracking combination of timing, resourcefulness, and good old common sense.
Requirements: Pentium 120, 16 MB RAM, SVGA

POWERSLIDE

GT Interactive

Preview

\GAMES\POWERSLD\POWER.EXE
Preview of Powerslide, an unbelievably fast and graphically dynamic tour de racing force. Designed with a state-of-the-art engine that delivers 60 frames of animation per second, Powerslide will challenge players to race throughout an array of terrains, each filled with huge jumps, treacherous turns



JOHNNY HERBERT'S GRAND PRIX

Midas Interactive
Racing Simulator

\GAMES\JH\SETUP.EXE

Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix Championship 1998 is a car racing game with stunning 3D graphics and superb sound. It features an accurate car simulation model developed in association with Johnny Herbert,

exciting tracks in different countries, multiple game modes (world championship, single race, and trainer mode), crashes, realistic car and engine damage, and much more.

Requirements: Pentium 120, 16 MB RAM, SVGA
3D: D3D, Glide, software

and high-speed action. Get ready to rock!

Requirements: Pentium 133, 16 MB RAM, SVGA

RECOIL

Virgin Interactive
Action

\GAMES\RECOIL\RECOIL.EXE

Forces from the future have taken over all computer systems including the military's. This is where you come in. Rebels need you to command a "state of the arts" remote controlled battle force tank. Should you fail, mankind will be caught in the deathgrip of a cold and brutal silicon god.

Requirements: Pentium 133, 32 MB RAM, SVGA
3D: D3D, software

TIGER WOODS PGA GOLF 99

EA Sports
Golf

\GAMES\GOLF\GOLF.EXE

He has changed the way the game is played on the golf course. Now, Tiger Woods is changing the way golf is played on the computer. Monster drives, chipping with a 3-wood, snaking putts the length of the yellow brick road. Here's Tiger in all his fist pumping, crowd jumping glory. This one hole demo lets you play the 3rd hole at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedre Beach Florida.

Requirements: Pentium 133, 32 MB RAM, SVGA
3D: D3D, Glide

TIMESHOCK PINBALL

Empire Interactive
Pinball

\GAMES\PINBALL\PINBALL.EXE

Pinball game in which you must travel back to the dawn of history. Solve the puzzle of the crystal fragments and you just may save the world. Bring along some spare quarters in case you don't.

Requirements: Pentium 75, 8 MB RAM, SVGA



RAILROAD TYCOON 2

Pop Top

Strategy [Real Time]

\GAMES\RR2\SETUP.EXE

Railroad Tycoon II is a strategists dream. Buy and sell stocks, schedule train routes, optimize consists, lay rail, build stations and company take overs. Throw in an intuitive interface, beautiful terrain, detailed rolling stock and attractive buildings and the game's bound to please the most dedicated train enthusiasts.

The demo includes two fully playable scenarios The Golden Age, focusing on the northeastern United States in the late 19th century, and Cape To Cairo, focusing on Cecil Rhodes unsuccessful effort to build a railroad across Africa and unite the continent at the turn of the century.

Requirements: Pentium 133, 16 MB RAM, SVGA

Panasonic S110

Panasonic

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What's New
by
Panasonic

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|-------------------|--|
| CRT TYPE | 21" (20"/58.8 cm viewable) flat screen |
| DOT PITCH | 0.25mm (H: 0.218 mm / V: 0.130mm) |
| SURFACE TREATMENT | Anti-glare, anti-static coating (AGRAS coat) |
| INPUT SIGNAL | |
| VIDEO | RGB analog |

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| HORIZONTAL FREQUENCY | Operation range: 30.0 kHz to 95.0 kHz |
| VERTICAL FREQUENCY | Operation range: 58.0 Hz to 180.0 Hz |
| MAXIMUM PIXEL CLOCK | 202.5 Mhz |
| MAXIMUM RESOLUTION | 1600 dots (H) x 1200 lines (V)/75 Hz |
| DISPLAY AREA | 392 x 294 mm (1600 x 1200) |

| *USER DEFINABLE TIMINGS Maximum pixel clock: 202.5 MHz: | |
|---|---------------------------|
| RESOLUTION | Maximum Refresh Rate (Hz) |
| 1152 x 870 | 103 |
| 1280 x 1024 | 88 |
| 1600 x 1200 | 75 |

*The table above lists the maximum which the S110 will operate for several standard resolutions. Note that not all video cards are capable of operating at the S110's higher refresh rates.

ULTRA VIOLENT WORLDS

Vorlon Software

3D Shooter

\GAMES\UVW\UVWDRC.EXE

The year is 2305. The Zarnaxians forces have entered our solar system with a sudden burst of ultra violence. Within an hour Earth's orbiting space station -

AlphaStation - was scorched by laser fire and blasted into space dust. Earth's defence forces are at their weakest and there is little hope for survival. Your mission: Return to Earth space and liberate Earth and the Mars colony.

Requirements: 486 DX/2, 8 MB RAM, VGA

Keyboard controls

Arrow Key - Directions

Left CTRL key - Fire



URBAN ASSAULT

Microsoft

3D Shooter

\GAMES\URBAN\UADEMO.EXE

Become one with the Machine as you lead the last vestiges of humanity back from the brink of oblivion in a post apocalyptic Earth ravaged by war and plague. The Machines have chosen you. They will not be denied. This demo contains 6 single-player levels, including two training mission levels.

Requirements: Pentium 133, 16 MB RAM, SVGA

3D: D3D

Utilities

Adobe Illustrator

Get fun and funky with layers in Adobe Illustrator 7.0, the drawing tool of choice for graphic designers and producers alike.

Adobe ImageStyler

A powerful and efficient toolset that lets you create professional-looking Web graphics.

Adobe Premier

Designed for video professionals this software offers an elegant interface with superb editing control for producing high-quality movies for video, multimedia, or the Web.

Advanced Disk Catalog

An easy to use tool with explorer-like interface which allows you to catalog your drives: floppies, CD-ROMs, ZIP disks etc.

Audiograbber

Audiograbber is a CD-ripper for windows 95 and NT. This allows you to make perfect cd quality .WAVs for your music needs. It has a lot of functions

including an option to make mp3 files and can also be used as an ordinary CD-player.

Automate

Work while you are away! Automate repetitive tasks so that you can devote your attention to more important things. Set up reminders so that you never forget anything important.

Encrypted Magic Folders

Automated & transparent encryption! Select folders whose files you want encrypted and this program makes those folders and files completely invisible to others but decrypts and encrypts the files automatically and transparently as you use them.

Multimedia Manager

A multimedia viewer that displays image files such as BMP, JPG, GIF, Animated GIF, PNG, TIF, TGA, PCD, PCX, ICO, MID, WAV, RMI, AVI, MOV, ANI, as well as many others. It also allows you to zoom, rotate, flip, rotate, and more.

Clip Magic

Clip Magic is an information manager that extends the capabilities of the Windows clipboard in order to capture, store, and categorise information from web sites and other applications.

Cybermedia Uninstaller

Your computer constantly accumulates junk files and fragments that fill the disk and slow it down. Over time, these useless files add up! UnInstaller is the safe, simple way to clear away the clutter and maximize your computer

Microsoft Money 99

Money management program to help with the family budget and balancing the books.

Sequebeat

Drum sample sequencing package, that plays real 44.1Khz drum samples that can be made into patterns and pattern playlists to create songs. Great for Guitar or bass practice or both... Jam out!

Internet

Bullet Proof FTP

Bullet Proof FTP is an FTP client for anyone who's ever been frustrated by unreliable FTP sites - once you tell it to download a file, there's not much that'll stop it from retrieving the file.

Gozilla

Gozilla will automate, track, and categorize all of the files that you download from the Internet.

Lynx Demon

Lynx Demon provides quick access through a system tray icon, to your 26 most common hyperlinks. HTTP, FTP, TELNET, and MAILTO: protocols are all supported.

Spam Buster

Kills junk e-mail. Easy to use e-mail filter catches and deletes junk e-mail before it gets into

your mailbox. Comes with over 17,000 known spammers, pre-built rules, alarm when e-mail arrives.

TIFNY

TIFNY is a visual, powerful, automated interface to USENET newsgroups. It lets you download images, text messages and other file formats without effort

VIRUS SCANNERS

For complete prevention, detection, and elimination of thousands of computer viruses we have made the latest virus scanners available in the /V-SCAN folder on the CD. Virus scanners included are - Antiviral Toolbox Pro, McAfee, Nortons and Thunderbyte.

PATCHES

As usual the game patches are located in the \PATCHES folder on the CD. Each patch has its own subdirectory [eg Quake 2 patches are in \PATCHES\QUAKE2] This month's feature patch is the Ureal Open GL beta driver. The full list of patches for this month are as follows:
Civil War Generals patch

Descent 2 upgrade

Final Fantasy 7 Cyrix fix

Quake 2 update

Rainbow Six update

Red Baron 2

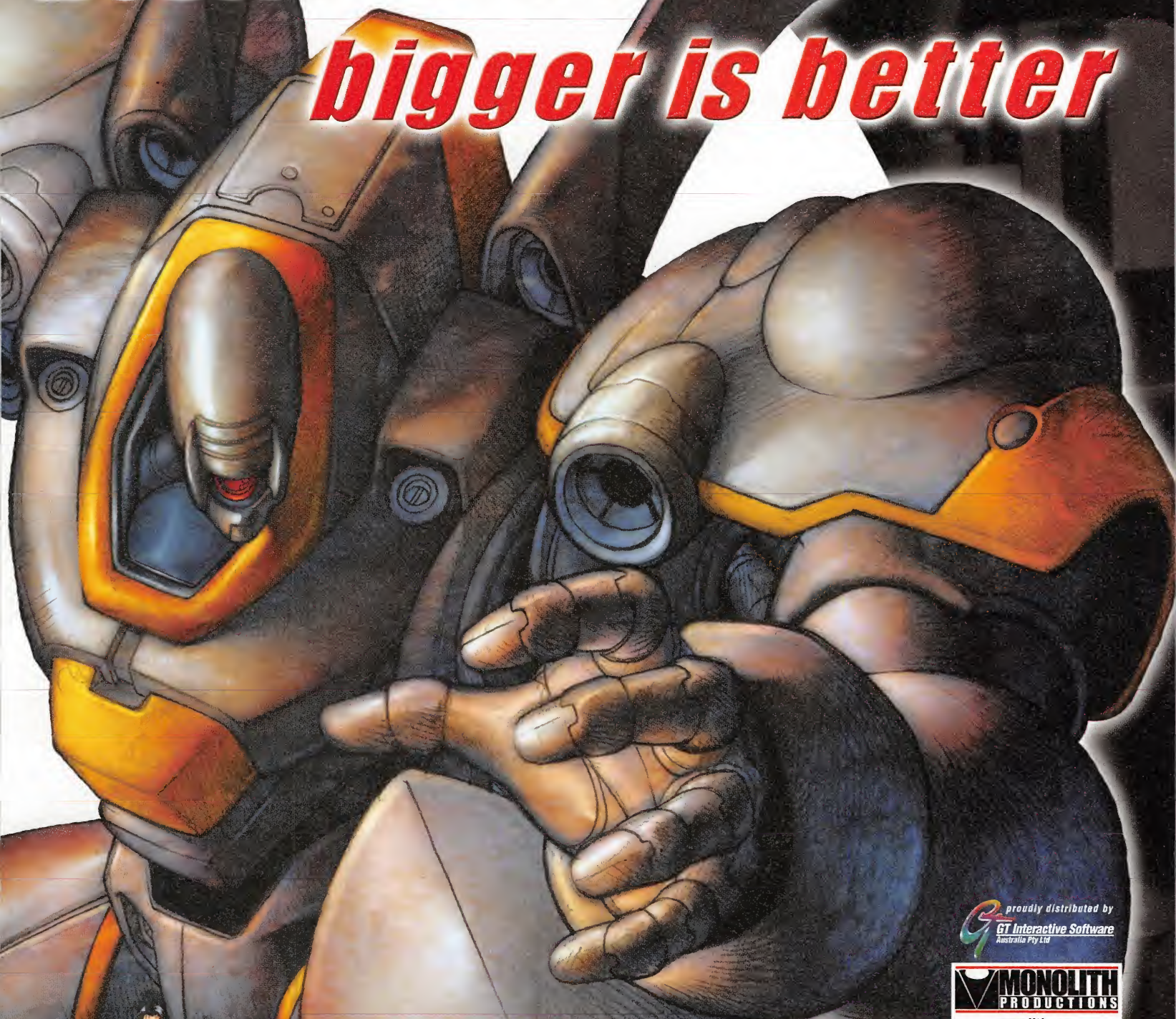
Unreal Open GL beta drivers

To install a patch simply copy the appropriate file[s] to where the game resides and launch. Check the information in the file for more installation instructions.

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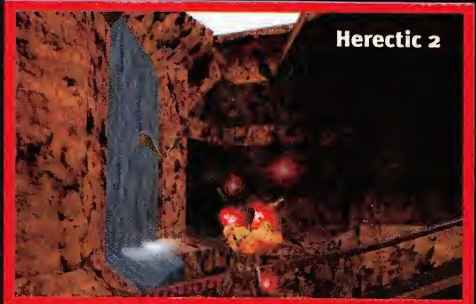
Heavy Gear 2



Fighter Squadron



Heretic 2



Quake II mission pack



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SIDELINES

Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of 3DO, has bought around 2.9 million shares in his own company, taking his total percentage of shares owned to 19.8%. The actual dollar value of the shares, or how much Hawkins' investment represents in real terms was not disclosed, but you can be sure that it's a fair chunk of change. Separately, though at around the same time, two other 3DO board members increased their holdings in the company, and many 3DO employees also have decided to participate in the company stock purchase program. Sounds like everyone at 3DO is confident about the continued growth and success of the company - maybe they know something we don't? Time will tell.

Are there really that many girls aged between 12 and 17 that are interested in computer games? Activision thinks so, they're banking on their collaborative effort with 'Teen Magazine', given the tentative title 'Teen Digital Diva', to be a success for them. Their main competition, "Sabrina, the Teenage Witch: Spellbound" is due out at around the same time, and developers Sierra hit back with a press release themselves - Penn Gillette (of Penn and Teller fame) will be lending his authentic voice to the character of the character he plays in the television series! The battles heat up for the hearts and minds of teeny girls, then. About time, too!

Eidos Interactive recently announced that they have secured the rights to create a computer game based on 20th Century Fox's Braveheart, which was directed by and starred Australia's (sort-of) own Mel Gibson. Players will be in control of one of the 16 'authentic' Scottish clans, with the task of bringing all the clans together to fight the despicable English. Mel Gibson himself has also been approached by Eidos to take part in the project in some capacity, and apparently he is keen to become involved, according to Eidos.

When you think of formula motor racing, whether you're an aficionado or just casual observer, one car manufacturers name stands out above the rest - Ferrari. They've been around since the beginning, and the distinctive Ferrari Red colour has never been far from the spotlight. They were also around in the 1960's F1 championships, and Sierra Sports have recently announced that they have secured the rights (for an undisclosed sum) to use the Ferrari 312 car in their Grand Prix Legends game, which is being developed by Papyrus. Forza Ferrari!

EX-ULTIMA STAFF FORM NEW COMPANY

Three of the top programmers from Ultima Online have left the company and started up their own company, with the same type of game designs in mind. Wombat Games is the brainchild of ex-UO lead programmers Rick Delashmit (aka Wyrd), Jason Spangler (aka Stormwind), and Ragnar Schneuermann (aka Psyklone). They're rather close-mouthed about their reasons for leaving Origin Systems, but Schneuermann has said that "UO suffers from a lack of clear vision", and it seems that the programmers had some definite ideas about what they wanted in an MMPORPG's (their term for 'Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games'), and the UO project wasn't fulfilling those

ideas. The group is still working for UO and Origin on a contract basis, particularly as Ultima: The Second Age enters the final stages of development, as well as acting as consultants for SegaSoft's upcoming MMPORPG, *rosix*.

On top of all this, they are also planning and developing their own MMPORPG (as yet untitled), and are actively seeking a publisher for their ideas. While the game will run along the same lines as UO, the developers are quick to point out that they saw some "fundamental design and vision problems with UO", and that their game will focus

upon "player interaction, both with other players in the game and the world in which they live. People will be the actors in our game, not just the audience". However, they are yet to explain how massively multiplayer games can be accessible and playable across the world with game servers only located in North America.



DIAMOND'S PORTABLE MP3 PLAYER

Despite the controversy surrounding the '.mp3' format because of extensive piracy of copyright protected audio material, Diamond Multimedia are throwing their weight behind the standard, and have announced that their forthcoming sound card, the MX300 will feature a hardware .mp3 player and software for conversion of other audio formats to .mp3.

They've also gone one step further too, with the recent unveiling of the Rio PMP 3000, a palm-sized portable device for playing '.mp3' files. The PMP (short for Personal Media Player) comes with 32MB of flash memory (upgradeable to 64MB maximum), from which users can upload .mp3 format musical or audio tracks to from their PC's.

Essentially, the Rio PMP is a modern alternative to the

Walkman and Discman (used with Compact Disks), with the advantage that the user can select any combination of tracks they like from their .mp3 library, and also that because the Rio contains no moving parts there's no 'skipping' when the unit is bumped.

The '.mp3' file format has come under a substantial amount of criticism because it allows for CD quality audio tracks to be compressed to around 1MB per minute of audio, and not surprisingly, there is a huge trade on the internet for pirate versions of copyright protected material, particularly of contemporary popular music. There is, of



course, plenty of 'legal' .mp3 files available for download, and Diamond will be including a CD with 175 of these

files with the Rio PMP, as well as software to convert CD-Audio tracks to .mp3 standards. Also, Diamond will be releasing the model locally very soon now, and though no clear details on price are available at this time, we're told that it will be "under \$500".

PC PowerPlayMate of the Month

What better choice for the inaugural PC PowerPlayMate of the Month than Detective Barbie! This girl (and PowerPlayMate won't always be a girl - just in case you're worried about our seemingly carefree sinking into cheap and stupid humour) typifies the modern gamer: she handles stress with dignity and style, wears the same clothes everyday, never washes, and spends most of her time in a 3D world. Damn we love her! Come on Barbie! Let's go party!

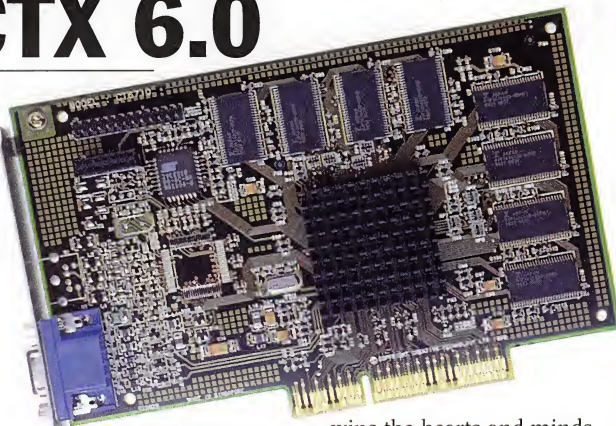


NVIDIA RIVA TNT READY FOR DIRECTX 6.0

Due to a strategic engineering and marketing relationship between Microsoft and nVidia corporation, nVidia have announced that they co-developed the "advanced multi-texturing features" in Microsoft's DirectX 6.0 Direct 3D API (Application Programming Interface) with the Redmond software giant.

Jen-Hsung Huang, the outspoken president and CEO of nVidia Corporation, said that "nVidia believes that proprietary API's [such as 3Dfx's Glide] are a losing strategy and we are committed to Microsoft and DirectX [...] The development and launch of DirectX 6.0 is significant, as it unleashes the power of our processor thereby enabling a stunning visual experience". The processor he was directly referring to is nVidia's latest graphics processor, the RIVA TNT, which is being marketed as the next generation of 2D and 3D performance.

In a bid to promote both the TNT and DirectX 6.0, nVidia and Microsoft have been trying to



wins the hearts and minds of games and graphics developers by jointly holding seminars and 'summer camps' throughout the US, Britain, and Canada (as previously reported in PCPP). Microsoft certainly seem happy with nVidia's support for their API, with Charles Boyd, the program manager for Direct3D at Microsoft saying that "As the most complete implementation of the DirectX 6.0 feature-set, Nvidia's RIVA TNT serves as the optimal reference platform for our developers".

AMD & 3Dfx join forces for Gamers

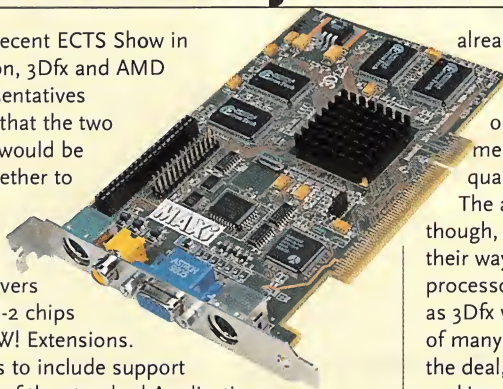
At the recent ECTS Show in London, 3Dfx and AMD representatives announced that the two companies would be working together to optimise Voodoo2 and Banshee drivers

for AMD K6-2 chips with 3DNow! Extensions. Their plan is to include support for all three of the standard Application Program Interfaces (API's); 3Dfx's Glide, Microsoft's Direct3D, and Silicon Graphics' OpenGL.

"We've taken full advantage of the 3DNow! Technology in the AMD K6-2 processor with our optimised drivers and we expect to see performance gains of up to 30% with the most popular games" said Vice President of Corporate Marketing for 3Dfx, Michael Howse. Beta versions of optimised K6-2 3DNow! Drivers for Quake 2 are

already available through the AMD website (www.amd.com/products/cpg/k623d/drivers.html), and though they are definitely only beta they do offer significant improvements both in terms of frame rate and picture quality.

The announcement is good news for AMD though, because they are currently trying to push their way into the gamers market with the K6-2 processor, and an affiliation with a company such as 3Dfx will do their image a lot of good in the eyes of many a gamer. 3Dfx also stand to gain from the deal, as they are seeking to solidify their position as the 3D chipset manufacturer of choice, as well as retain interest in their proprietary API, Glide.



Diablo II 3D accelerated

When you think of native support for 3D accelerator cards, the kind of games that first spring to mind are from the First Person Shooter and Sports Sim genres. However, Blizzard have recently announced that they will be one of the first developers to make use of the Glide 3 SDK, so providing native support for 3Dfx and Voodoo2 based cards, with the upcoming RPG,



however, as Blizzard are only including 3D support as a 'value added feature' for the game.

SIDELINES

The world of computer games has taken another huge step forward, with the release of Head Games' latest in their interactive hunting experiences; Duck Hunter Pro. Featuring all the quality that we've come to expect from Head Games, DHP will enable 'sports' shooter wannabe's to kill, main, and torture Canada geese, Snow geese, Mallards, Wood Ducks, and Canvas backs, amongst other defenceless creatures. Best of all, the game features (we kid you not) an "easy-to-use Chevy Truck Interface", though apparently the rumours about the secret "shoot the tree huggin' bird lovin' hippie" section are untrue (much to the chagrin of many a 'sports' shooter, we're sure).

Cyprus Hill, best known for their anthemic Hip Hop Hit "Hits from the bong" (which, we're told, is apparently some sort of drug reference), make the kind of music that Xatrix think will suit their upcoming shooter 'Kingpin' right down to the ground. In fact, so much so that Interplay (the publishers of Kingpin) have announced that Cypress Hill's new CD "Cyprus Hill IV" will feature as the soundtrack to the game. "The hard core sounds of hip-hop are making the natural progression from the stage and big screen and into the interactive gaming community", said Xatrix president Drew Markham. He wouldn't comment, however, on speculation that Mars Bars were to become a new powerup in the game as a result.

Gradually, USB devices are beginning to be released both here and overseas, and now there's news of one of the first Monitors to be released for the USB specification. The 19 inch Viewsonic MB90 offers an 0.26mm Dot Pitch, 204MHz video bandwidth (though the USB), and also built in sound hardware too. We haven't been able to sample the sound quality of the multimedia components of the monitor, but purchasers will also be able to connect a subwoofer to the system by plugging directly in to the monitor itself, via a rear mounted port.

Beam International, the Australian publishing house which controls Beam Software and Melbourne House (amongst others), is looking to become listed on the American stock exchange (NASDAQ). Beam have entered into an agreement with Australian Mezzanine Investments and Trusts (AMIT) for investment of \$6 million in the Beam group. Beam representatives say that the funding will be used to increase its capacity to develop and publish more games and to establish themselves in the U.S. market.

NewsWire US

Don St John



Groovy, baby!

No, I haven't been overdosing on Austin Powers (although I'm old enough, barely, to actually remember that era, and I've always dug Burt Bacharach tunes. (A complete lie, I've seen Mr St John at heavy metal gigs and you've never seen a happier camper. Ed.)). Instead, that's the greeting at lanparty.com, which is fast becoming the clearinghouse you want to visit for one way you really ought to play games.

LAN parties are gaining fast momentum over here in the States and, I hear, in Europe where Internet access is a lot more expensive than our US\$20 all-you-can-eat hookups. The concept is pretty simple: You schlep your computer and monitor over to someone's house or, if it's a bigger gathering, a hall, and plug it into an Ethernet hub. Bingo! Instant, lag-free gaming, assuming your host has done his homework properly. If you have the urge and patience to try hosting one, lanparty.com has plenty of tips on how to make the whole thing go right, from getting your network up and running to just what junk food is de rigueur.

The LAN party scene is popular enough that the same dudes who bring you PlanetQuake have launched lanparty.com for listings, tips, news reports. Usually there's a small charge to get in (to cover hall rentals, pizza runs, etc.), but the payoff is a lot of people who are interested in exactly the same thing as you-fragging as many asses as



possible. How can you beat that?

Another thing I'm old enough to remember is when J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord Of The Rings* was all the rage. And rightly so: I still consider this masterpiece of fantasy storytelling to be my all-time favourite read.

Which is why recent developments on the Tolkien scene are so welcome. There's the upcoming series of live-action movies based on the novel, being shot down your way (well, in New Zealand). And Sierra has just announced a massively multiplayer online RPG, *Middle-earth*, set in the novel's world at a time after the book's events have taken place. The locations, characters and player interactions will all be built on the familiar settings and people in *The Lord Of The Rings*.

Ultima Online and Asheron's Call aside, this has to be one of the most potentially exciting developments in online RPGs in recent memory. Even those games's developers will tell you that their concepts owe a lot to the basic LOTR vision; now we may see the real thing, if it's done right. Look for the beta test in the middle of next year, with a full launch in 2000; if you want to keep track in the meantime, www.middle-earth.com is the place.

Death, Taxes and another Star Wars game

Ask any Star Wars fan what they would most like to be able to do in the X-Wing series, and more often than not the answer you'll hear is "I wanna be able to fly the Millennium Falcon!" Well, SW fans' wishes are set to become true, with the release (expected mid-next year) of X-Wing: Alliance. Once again, Larry Holland's "Totally Games" development company is at the helm of the design, and along with the ability to pilot (and act as gunner for) the Millennium Falcon there will also be a host of other refinements to the extremely popular X-Wing series.

The criticism levelled at X-Wing v Tie Fighter regarding its' reliance on Multiplayer functions at the expense of single player immersion will be addressed in X-Wing: Alliance, with a strong and focused storyline for the single player game. Chronologically, the events in the game will take place in between the Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi, though the main characters will not be from the movies. Instead, players will be taking the part of a hitherto unknown character who joins up with the Rebel Alliance, with the story culminating in the player piloting the Millennium Falcon into the bowels of the second Death Star. "The highly anticipated addition of the Millennium Falcon in X-Wing Alliance finally gives Star Wars fans what they've long hoped for - the chance to emulate Han Solo by flying the legendary Corellian transport into the heat of battle", said Larry Holland. And that say it all, really.



The fastest hunk of junk in the galaxy; take the Millennium Falcon's controls and fly her through the second Death Star in X-Wing Alliance

TOP TEN GAMES

| Rank | Title | Developer / Distributor |
|------|-------|--|
| TW | LW | |
| 1 | 1 | UNREAL GT INTERACTIVE / ROADSHOW |
| 2 | 4 | MECH COMMANDER MICROPROSE / DIGITAL LEISURE |
| 3 | 3 | AFL '98 EA SPORTS / EA |
| 4 | 12 | COMMANDOS EIDOS / OZISOFT |
| 5 | 15 | STARCRAFT BLIZZARD / WOLF |
| 6 | 8 | LINKS LS '98 ACCESS / OZISOFT |
| 7 | 2 | TIGER WOODS '99 EA SPORTS / EA |
| 8 | 13 | AGE OF EMPIRES ENSEMBLE / MICROSOFT |
| 9 | 5 | HEART OF DARKNESS OCEAN / ROADSHOW |
| 10 | - | CROC FOX / EA |

Week ending 13th September

The ACER best selling charts are carefully compiled from a sample panel of retailers selected across Australia including mass merchants, department stores, specialty software stores and independent outlets. Retailers surveyed include Myer Grace Bros, K Mart, Target, Big W, Harvey Norman Computer Super stores, Hi-Tech World, Video Games Heaven, Games Wizards, Hedlam Computers, and Software Today. ACER assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions ©1997

Charts supplied by Australian Computer Entertainment Review

ACER

Broderbust

That huge crash you just heard wasn't a giant tree toppling in the forest—it was a gaming/multi-media industry giant going down for the final count. The huge sales of *Myst*, *Riven*, and even *Where In The World Is Carmen SanDiego?* wasn't enough to save Brøderbund, the venerable gaming company unexpectedly folded by recent purchaser The Learning Company.

The move blows Brøderbund's Red Orb gaming label into dust, gates 500 Brøderbund employees, and puts the kibosh—at least temporarily—on several titles in early development. The Learning Company has shelved everything Red Orb had going, including *Extreme Warfare* and *Baja 1000 Racing*, except *Prince of Persia 3D*; it's also given the rights to the next installment of *The Journeyman Project* back to developers Presto Studios.

Existing titles (including, presumably, the recent DVD-ROM versions of *Riven* and *The Journeyman Project 3: Legacy of Time*) will fall under the Mindscape label, which The Learning Company bought last spring. As for lesser titles such as *Warbreeds* and *The Last Express*...well, if you see 'em now, you may want to buy 'em. *DSJ*



NewsWire UK

Steve Boxer

Perhaps triggered by the evil Murdoch's attempted purchase of Manchester United, the widely predicted take-over fever in the games industry seems at last to be kicking off. Although, perhaps not quite in the way everyone expected.

Hasbro's determination to establish itself as a major force in the publishing world manifested itself first. The toy/board games giant now appears to have purchased MicroProse, accordingly. While rumours that Eidos is about to purchase Psygnosis from Sony refuse to go away, Eidos has had to content itself with the purchase of San Francisco developer Crystal Dynamics and the signing of hot new British developers Mucky Foot and Elixir. For now, Psygnosis' external developers have been getting extremely nervous, and the number of CVs flying around from Psygnosis employees has done little to calm their jitters. One Psygnosis external developer, currently looking to recruit new staff, actually received a CV from its own producer at Psygnosis, via an employment agency. Should one laugh or cry?

Virgin Interactive Entertainment - shock, horror - does actually still exist, it seems. Although nobody seems sure precisely what sort of games portfolio it has now that EA has prised Westwood

Studios and a few other choice goodies away from Viacom, and Activision has signed up LucasArts. Disturbingly for Virgin, Capcom has begun the process of setting up a proper European operation. The company best known for the Resident Evil franchise is, of course, a publisher and distributor in the US and Japan, and although it wouldn't say so explicitly, it left nobody in any doubt that its ideal scenario would be for Virgin to soldier on in Europe for a while, while Capcom goes through the process of setting itself up as a publisher in Europe, too.

Rumours that Infogrames has been trying to buy Activision have induced a state of high dudgeon among the Santa Monica-based company's employees, meanwhile. Take 2 Interactive has also been making noises about new acquisitions, although God knows what remains in the industry to be purchased. And the evil Murdoch's Fox Interactive appears to be building up its muscles in preparation for a new, higher-profile presence in the games market, which could include launching itself as a proper European publisher. Phew. While you Aussies may relish the prospect of the man known over here as The Dirty Digger achieving a worldwide power base that would make Uncle Bill Gates look like a small-time potato

farmer, we cynical Brits find him incredibly sinister - mainly because of the way he has nicked most of the football from our free terrestrial TV channels, established the filthy rag The Sun as the hideously prurient voice of the unwashed masses and turned the once-mighty Times newspaper into a cut-price comic. A recent poll stated that 96 per cent of Man United fans oppose Murdoch's buy-out. But, then again, nobody has ever taken Man United fans - who are famed for coming from all parts of the country apart from Manchester - at all seriously.

Merger mania apart, the rest of the UK games industry's attention has been taken up by yet another wrangle between SCi and the British Board of Film Classification. Last time round, the censor refused Carmageddon a licence, SCi headed to the European Court, the decision was overturned and Carmageddon belatedly received an 18 cert. In the intervening period, the country has acquired a new censor (namely Andreas Whittam Smith, founder of the upmarket newspaper The Independent), who has started to make discouraging noises about granting Carmageddon II: Carpcocalypse Now an 18 certificate. Rumours that SCi has begun work on a game version of the film Groundhog Day appear to have no basis in fact.



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Best Game Overall
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 Best Graphics

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HOW TO VOTE CARD

The awards cover the period from the beginning of November 1997, which means that all the games in this issue round off the year. This way, we cover the big games from last Christmas.

The winners will be published in PC PowerPlay # 32, January 1999. Just fill in the voting form based on the eligible games. If somehow we've missed your favourite game, go ahead and vote for it anyway! So long as it qualifies for the period Nov'97 to Oct'98.

Important: All votes must be received by the 16th of November 1998!

Send the form to: **PC PowerPlay
 GOTY
 78 Renwick St, Redfern,
 NSW 2016, Australia**

GAME OF THE YEAR

★ ★ 1998

Last chance to vote!

Election-fever is running hot. Very hot indeed. Into our second month of voting and Australia Post profits look far healthier than the state of the rainforests that are being levelled to provide the raw materials for GOTY.

This is your last chance to vote. You know what you like, you know what you hate. Cast your vote and it'll be mixed into the Great Melting Pot of Destiny, with that all-important winners list spat out at the end of it all. Be involved! Have your say! Pay due credit to those games which brought you happiness and smite those which offended thee.

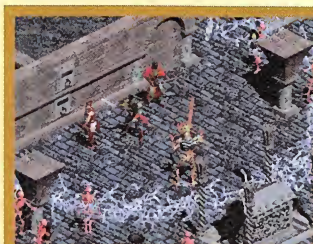
Why give a damn?

Unlike most other half-baked space-filling awards, GOTY is the real deal. The difference is twofold:

1. GOTY is **READER'S CHOICE!** That's you. Yes, you.

We care what you think and so do the tens of millions of other PCPP readers. So, have your say and participate in the democratic process.

2. GOTY is huge and enormous. Voting runs over 2 issues to give everyone a chance to enter, as well as giving us time to compile the results. There's only one GOTY that matters, the PCPP GOTY. Tell that to any Doubting Thomas! Ha!



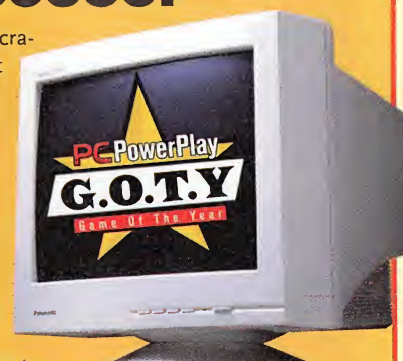
Last year's winner, **Diablo**, went on to bigger and better things, like **Diablo II**. And it's all because of you.

WIN A 21" PANASONIC MONITOR WORTH ALMOST \$3000!

Don't just do it for democracy, be motivated by the most powerful force in the universe - self interest!

We've scored a magnificent Panasonic PanaSync S110 monitor to give away. We'll randomly draw a winner from the voters at the end of the voting period.

With full digital multiscan technology, the S110 will automatically adjust its picture to look as good as possible with your monitor. We've tested this baby and it'll transform your gaming like nothing else can. At 21 inches, this mother will give you the virtual reality that you need in your life. You want one.



THE GAMES

KEY:

■ First person action

■ Action

■ Real Time Strategy

■ Turn-based Strategy

■ RPG

■ Driving/Racing

■ Flight Sim

■ Action Adventure

■ Fantasy Flight Sim

■ Adventure

■ Puzzle

■ Sports

NOVEMBER 1997 Issue 18

- Hexen 2
- Jedi Knight
- G-Police
- Total Annihilation
- Close Combat 2
- Fallout
- Shadows of the Empire
- Man of War
- Dark Colony
- Postal
- Grand Theft Auto
- Sabre Ace
- Ignition
- Outpost 2
- Paris French Open
- Beasts and Bumpkins
- Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee
- Shadow Warrior
- Duckman
- Front Page Sports Golf
- Legacy of Kain
- SU-27 Flanker Mission Disk
- Voodoo Kid
- War Gods
- Moon Buggy 98
- Solar Crusade

DECEMBER 1997 Issue 19

- Blade Runner
- AFL 98
- Tomb Raider 2
- Incubation
- Riven
- Dark Earth
- Take No Prisoners
- Cart: Precision Racing
- Sub Culture
- Galapagos
- Overboard
- Formula Karts
- Worms 2
- Perfect Assassin
- KKnD Extreme
- Dreams to Reality
- Broken Sword 2
- The Tone Rebellion
- Red Alert: The Aftermath
- The Feeble Files
- Resident Evil
- NHL 98
- Virtual Pool 2
- Chasm: The Rift
- Speedboat Attack
- Water World
- 7th Legion

- Monster Trucks
- Daytona USA Deluxe

JANUARY 1998 Issue 20

- TOCA Touring Cars
- FIFA 98
- Myth: The Fallen Lords
- Turok Dinosaur Hunter
- Armoured Fist 2
- Joint Strike Fighter
- Zork Grand Inquisitor
- Netstorm
- Sid Meier's Gettysburg
- X-Car
- Heavy Gear
- Nuclear Strike
- Mage Slayer
- Madden 98
- NBA Live 98
- Flying Corps Gold
- MIB
- Combat Chess
- Evidence
- Jonah Lomu Rugby
- Puma World Football 98

FEBRUARY 1998 Issue 21

- Quake 2
- I-War
- Seven Kingdoms
- F22 ADF
- Longbow 2
- Curse of Monkey Island
- Imperialism
- Pax Imperia
- Speed Rally
- Steel Panthers
- Jack Nicklaus 5
- Andretti Racing
- Panzer General 2
- VR Sports Baseball 97
- Int. Rally Championship
- Caesar's Palace
- 3D Ultra Pinball
- Streets of Sim City
- Virtua Cop 2
- Civ 2 Fantastic Worlds
- Need for Speed 2 SE
- Blood Plasma
- MTG: Spells of Ancients

MARCH 1998 Issue 22

- Battlezone
- Wing Commander Prophecy
- Uprising
- F-22 Raptor
- Tanarus
- Warhammer 40K
- Journeyman Project 3
- Warwind II
- Flight Unlimited II
- F1 Racing Sim
- Shanghai Dynasty
- East Front
- Air Warrior III
- Hellfire Diablo
- Entrepreneur
- Achtung Spitfire
- SODA Offroad Racing
- Civil War II: Generals
- Croc
- Twisted Metal II
- Jet Moto

- Redneck Rampage: Route '66
- Battleground 8: Waterloo
- X Wing vs. TIE: Balance Power
- Howzat
- Dungeon Keeper: Deeper Dungeons
- Hoyle Casino '98

APRIL 1998 Issue 23

- Red Baron 2
- Lords of Magic
- Deadlock 2
- The Reap
- C&C Sole Survivor
- Ultimate Race Pro
- Pro Pilot
- Descent To Undermountain
- Balls Of Steel
- Mysteries of the Sith
- Legal Crime
- Manx TT
- Fighting Force
- USCF Chess
- Sega Touring Car Championship
- Beat The House 2
- Actua Golf 2
- Great Battles of Hannibal
- NBA Action 98

MAY 1998 Issue 24

- Star Wars: Rebellion
- Tex Murphy: Overseer
- Incoming
- Starship Titanic
- Ubik
- Shadow Master
- Black Dahlia
- Redline Racer
- Last Bronx
- FPS: Skiing
- Final Conflict
- Semper Fi
- Safe Cracker
- The Golf Pro

JUNE 1998 Issue 25

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- Die by the Sword
- Jane's F-15
- M1 Tank Platoon
- Warhammer: Dark Omen
- Armor Command
- Star Trek Pinball
- Powerboat Racing
- Queen: The Eye
- Interstate '76 Arsenal
- Dark Reign: Rise of the Shadowhand
- Trophy Bass 2
- Magic the Gathering: Spec. Edition
- Monty Python's Meaning of Life
- Sim Safari
- Wolfenstein 3D

JULY 1998 Issue 26

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- TA: Core Contingency
- Outwars
- Redneck Rampage Rides Again
- Ancient Evil
- Castrol Honda Superbikes
- Monster Truck Madness 2
- Pilgrim

- Triple Play 99
- World League Soccer 98
- Warbreeds
- Egypt 1156 BC
- Motorhead
- Of Light and Darkness
- Plane Crazy
- World League Basketball
- Beast Wars
- Mastermind
- Claw
- Monopoly: World Cup 98
- Mechwarrior 2: Titanium
- Tomb Raider: Unfinished Business

AUGUST 1998 Issue 27

- Mech Commander
- The X-Files
- Descent: Freespace
- Sentinel Returns
- Heart of Darkness
- Final Fantasy VII
- Quake II: The Reckoning
- X-COM: Interceptor
- World Cup 98
- Extreme Tactics
- Alien Earth
- Soldiers at War
- Anastasia
- Nightmare Creatures
- Comanche Gold
- Street Fighter Alpha 2
- F22 ADF: Rea Sea
- Panzer Commander
- Hexen II: Portal of Praevus

September 1998 Issue 28

- Dune 2000
- Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines
- Spec Ops: Ranger Assault
- KKnD 2: Krossfire
- Cyberstorm 2: Corporate War
- Stratosphere: Conquest of the Skies
- Team Apache
- Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit
- International Cricket Captain
- Hexplode
- Indy Racing
- Xenocracy
- House of the Dead
- Bio Freaks
- Civ 2: Multiplayer + classic
- Gex 2: Enter the Gecko
- Bass Masters Classic Tournament

October 1998 Issue 29

- Urban Assault
- SWAT 2
- The Creed
- Hard War
- U.F.O
- War Games
- Vangers
- Starcraft Insurrection
- Fields of Fire
- Warlords 3 Darklords
- Adrenix
- Army Men
- Micro Machines V3
- Cyberball
- Wreckin Crew
- Soldier Boyz
- Ultra Violent Worlds

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Cooperative/Deathmatch Multiplayer Battles to Brave

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FRIENDLY FAMILY FUN BOX

Compaq Presario 5130

- Intel Pentium II 350
 - 64Mb SDRAM
 - 6GB Hard Drive
 - 56k Modem
 - Presario V510 15" monitor
 - 2 x AGP ATI Rage Prographics card
 - Aureal A3D sound
 - DVD 2
- RRP: \$3899

Setting up the Presario 5130 out of the box is incredibly easy - which, after all, is why you would buy an off-the-shelf system like this. Compaq have included a poster on where everything goes; there's even a 4 page manual on setting up your monitor. On top of all this, nearly everything is colour coded, so it's mostly a case of, plug the blue connector into the blue slot, etc.

Powering up though, we were disappointed to watch the Compaq detect 6 new pieces of hardware, which then had to be set up. There was also a "file not found error" the first time the computer was booted up. For a new user to be confronted with some relatively complex configuration options the very first time they run their pride and joy defeats the

purpose of buying such a machine, we think.

Once in Windows there is an online support guide that contains various help features and a diagnosis program. This is the sort of friendliness we expect from a Compaq.

The computer combines up-to-date yet affordable hardware. Starting with a 350MHz Pentium II processor, along with this is 64 megs of syncDRAM, a 56k modem, a DVD2 ROM drive and 6 Gigs of hard disk space, which should be enough for most people. The video card is an ATI 3D Rage Pro, which is better known for its 2D rather than its 3D performance.

A great feature of the 5130 is its 'Creativity Action Center'. This is an area on the front of the computer with a COM port to plug your joystick etc. into, and two USB ports, great for a digital camera or scanner. Very sensible idea this, although with these ports up-front the PC was as friendly and usable as a console - which gave us a cold shiver.

Sound isn't a problem, as the computer combines an ESS sound card with an Aureal A3D chip, with 2 deceptively powerful speakers. However, a few times when we changed



the volume via the keyboard controls we got Window's error screens.

Upgradability is where this computer suffers. There's only one open PCI slot, along with another PCI/ISA combo slot. To add to these problems, there is not much accessibility, as the power supply is near the middle of the tower.

Compaq obviously decided to design a computer that was aimed towards a wide market. Overall, the 5130 is a computer that would easily suit the needs for an average home user, or for a family computer. Some people however may be turned away due to the lack of upgradability.

Mike Hamel

HARDCORE GAMING GEAR

GED P2 400

- Intel Pentium II 400MHz
 - Chaintech 6BTM BX motherboard
 - 128 Mb SDRAM
 - 8.6 Gig hard drive
 - 32x CD ROM
 - 2 x 12 Mb Righteous Voodoo 2's
 - 8Mb ATI All in Wonder AGP2 graphics card
 - Righteous Nusound A3D sound card
 - Banksia Wave 56 or Netcomm Roadster 56 modem
 - Cambridge Soundworks speakers
 - Sony CDP-200ES Monitor
- RRP: \$6955
- Contact: GED Computers: 02 98298804

We all get the upgrade blues. You know you need something meatier to run Unreal - but what to buy and where to buy it? There are so many different components of such varying performance, finding what's best is usually only half the story, and getting them to run together smoothly is the real dilemma.

We were recently sent this PC for testing by GED Computers. These lads profess to be 'true gamers', and that they custom-build

their PCs with gamers in mind. Yep, sure, we've heard that before.

But it's really true, you see. GED will custom build your gaming beast to spec, but their forte is creating a monster that would be better than anything you're likely to require. We received a top-of-the line GED Gamer for a week's playtesting. As you can see from the specs above, the GED Gamer has power to burn. GED don't really enjoy building low-end machines, so when they put together the Gamer they go off. Sporting 2 Righteous Voodoo 2's in SLI and an 8Meg ATI 2D/3D primary card, plus a full 128 megs of SDRAM, it'll be a while before you have to turn down any graphic detail in a game. Sound too, benefits from their hardcore attitude, with the incorporation of the Orchid Nusound A3D card. All this pumps



through the Cambridge Soundworks speakers that we love the best.

Being totally high-end, GED prefer to use only Sony Trinitron monitors. This, plus the inclusion of only the highest-spec parts throughout tends to push the price up a bit above average, but for hardcore gamers this is the finest games-specific PC we've had the pleasure of playing with.

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NEW 3D

Benchtested:

Diamond Stealth II G460
Matrox Millenium G200
Matrox Mystique G200
Creative Blaster RivaTNT
Guillemot Maxi Gamer Phoenix (Voodoo Banshee)

Specifications:

2D/3D Controller Intel740
Bus Type AGP 2x (DME)
Memory 8MB 100MHz SDRAM
RAMDAC 203MHz
3D features Backface culling
 Colour Alpha Blending
 Edge Anti-aliasing
 Flat and Gouraud shading
 Fogging
 Bilinear filtering
 Per pixel perspective correction
 Specular lighting
 Stippling
 Texture chroma keying
Max Resolution 1600x1200 (2D)
 1200x1024 (3D)
Z buffer 16bit
Video Playback MPEG-1
 X and Y scaling and filtering

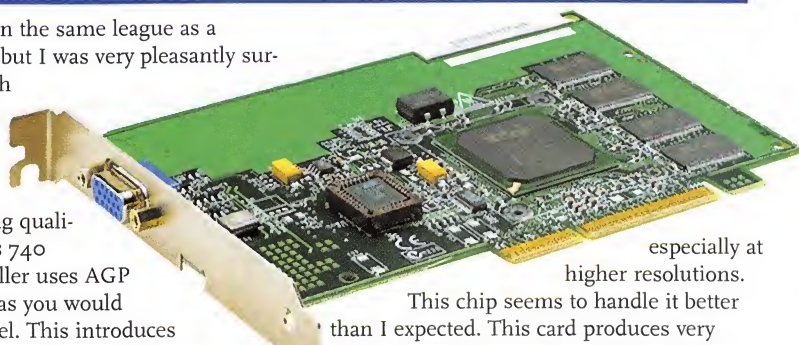
Specifications:

2D/3D Controller 3DFX Voodoo Banshee
Bus Type PCI
Memory 16MB SDRAM
RAMDAC 250MHz
3D features Alpha Blending
 Bilinear Filtering, Trilinear Filtering
 Environment Mapping
 Fogging
 Flat and Gouraud Shading
 MIP Mapping
 Per pixel Perspective Correction
 Specular Highlights
Max Resolution 1920 x 1440x24 (2D)
 1600 x 1200x16 (3D)
Z buffer 16bit
Video Playback MPEG-1
 MPEG-2 Hardware Assist
 X and Y scaling and filtering

We have gathered together an awesome array of the new generation of 3D accelerators - including the two most anticipated 3D chipsets of 1998; the nVidia RivaTNT and the Voodoo Banshee. We tested these cards along with a Matrox Millenium G200 and an i740 based Diamond Stealth II G460 through an exhaustive array of the latest games and benchmarks.

DIAMOND STEALTH II G460

So it's not in the same league as a Voodoo2, but I was very pleasantly surprised with this card. Although it didn't win any speed awards, the 3D rendering quality might. Intel's 740 graphics controller uses AGP 2x to its fullest as you would expect from Intel. This introduces problems if not handled correctly, as the graphics chip needs to write to the video buffer with a constant stream of information. The bandwidth constraint placed on a 3D chip when all the textures have to be retrieved from system RAM is quite large,



especially at higher resolutions. This chip seems to handle it better than I expected. This card produces very sharp and vibrant images and is certainly worth a look if you are on a tight budget.

GUILLEMOT MAXI GAMER PHOENIX (VOODOO BANSHEE)

This is the chipset we have all been waiting for ever since the problematic Voodoo Rush was first released.

The Phoenix is the first Banshee board that has passed through the PC PowerPlay labs. This chipset rocks! The Maxi Gamer posted some insane benchmark scores. The Voodoo Banshee is basically a Voodoo2 3D core with a TMU (Texel Management Unit) missing. Which basically means it can't do multi-texturing in a single pass. This equates to lower scores in Quake II and other multi-texture aware games. Few games take advantage of Multi-texturing at this stage, so it actually beat a Voodoo2 because the Banshee is running at 100MHz, as opposed to the Voodoo2's 90MHz.



The benchmarks certainly show the Voodoo Banshee off as a serious 3D card. The awesome 2D performance also can't be ignored as the Banshee offers the highest 2D resolution anywhere doing it at a massive 1920x1440 with 16.7 million colours!

If you are looking for a good 2D/3D board with the addition of 3Dfx support then you can't go past a Voodoo Banshee board.

Specifications:

Millenium

2D/3D Controller MGA-G200

Bus Type AGP 2x (DME)

Memory 8MB standard SGRAM
(16MB upgradable : Tested)

RAMDAC 250MHz

3D features Alpha Blending

Full scene Anti-aliasing

Flat and Gouraud shading

Fogging

Hardware triangle set engine

Bilinear and Trilinear filtering

Per pixel perspective correction

Specular lighting

Max Resolution 1920 x 1200x24 (2D)

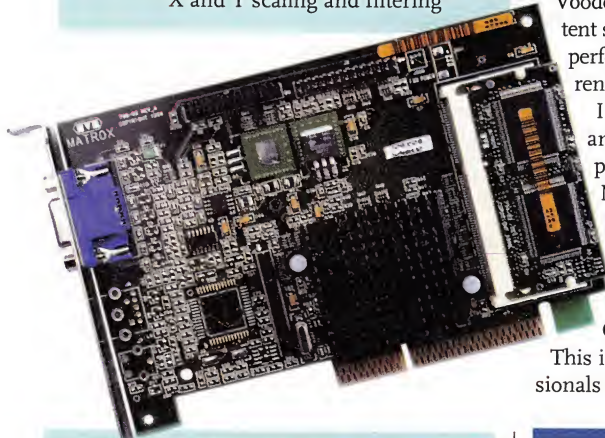
1280 x 1024x32 (3D)

Z buffer 32bit

Video Playback MPEG-1

MPEG-2 software (hardware assist
upgrade module available)

X and Y scaling and filtering



MATROX MILLENIUM G200 & MATROX MYSTIQUE G200

These two cards have certainly changed my view of Matrox, I know they always used to do 2D very well, but their last attempt at 3D was, how should I say, complete crap! That said, with these cards Matrox has really turned it around.

The G200 has turned out to be quite a formidable beast - especially for graphics professionals. Both of these cards have a rendering quality that others should be judged by. When you have viewed Incoming at 1024x768x32 bit colour you will know what I mean. There really isn't much separating these two cards, apart from the Millenium having a faster RAMDAC and the Mystique having a TV-out connection. The 3D performance of these cards is pretty much identical. Although these cards are certainly not Voodoo2 killers, they produced pretty consistent scores in the benchmarks; not breakneck performance though, but the 32bit rendering makes up for that.

I would recommend this card to any one that needs the killer 2D performance synonymous with Matrox and beautiful 32bit rendering capabilities. The G200 is the only card in this lineup that has a 32bit Z-buffer, which will certainly come in handy for CAD work.

This is a card for all graphics professionals and gamers alike.

Mystique

2D/3D Controller MGA-G200

Bus Type AGP 2x

Memory 8MB standard SDRAM (16MB upgradable)

RAMDAC 230MHz

3D features Alpha Blending

Full scene Anti-aliasing

Flat and Gouraud shading

Fogging

Hardware triangle set engine

Bilinear and Trilinear filtering

Per pixel perspective correction

Specular lighting

Max Resolution 1920 x 1200x16 (2D)

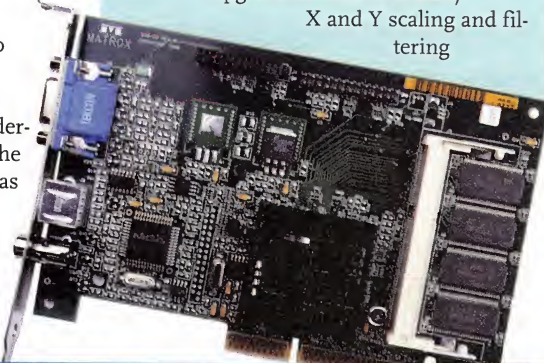
1280 x 1024x32 (3D)

Z buffer 32bit

Video Playback MPEG-1

MPEG-2 software (hardware assist
upgrade module available)

X and Y scaling and filtering



Specifications:

2D/3D Controller nVidia RivaTNT

Bus Type AGP 2x + Sidebanding

Memory 16MB SDRAM

RAMDAC 250MHz

3D features Alpha Blending

Full screen Anti-Aliasing

Bilinear Filtering, Trilinear

Filtering, Anisotropic Filtering

Hardware Bump Mapping

Environment Mapping

Fogging

Flat and Gouraud Shading

MIP Mapping

Per pixel Perspective Correction

Specular Highlights

Single Pass Multi-texturing

Max Resolution 1920 x 1200x24 (2D)

1600 x 1200x32 (3D)

Z buffer 24bit or 16bit

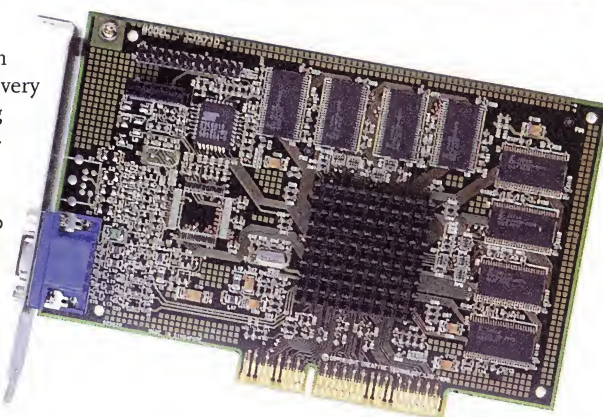
Video Playback MPEG-1

X and Y scaling and filtering

CREATIVE BLASTER RivaTNT

We saw one of these boards in the last issue from Diamond but it was still an alpha model. Creative have done a very good job with this board, including great drivers. The 3D tweaking section of display properties actually allows you to change the memory speed with a slider control from 80 - 130MHz! The rest of the software bundled with this card is also very good, including 3DEEP, a gamma correction tool.

The performance is certainly up there with a Voodoo2, but not close to an SLI configuration though. The TNT's advanced features also help with support for Full-scene anti-aliasing, Anisotropic filtering and hardware bump mapping to really tame those new



games. The TNT also has the added bonus of being able to run in 32bit colour, Quake II never looked so good. A must-have for any hardcore gamer.

THE BEST OF THE BEST

It is still early days with these new chipsets. You can expect a large number of OEM companies like Diamond, Creative, STB, etc. to release cards based on the i740, RivaTNT and the Voodoo Banshee. As more cards become available we will put them up

against each other to find the champions among them. Until then, if you are in the market for a new accelerator then certainly take a look at either of these cards, depending on your budget. nVidia is certainly ahead in the performance stakes at the moment, so if you

want the ultimate Quake II or SIN performance, then it's either a RivaTNT or a Voodoo 2. If you want a very good 2D/3D card that's not going to break the bank with extremely good 3D performance then a Voodoo Banshee card should be your choice.

BENCHMARKS

AGP DME (Direct Memory Execute) v's Local texturing.

Casting your gaze over the benchmarks, you will see that the Voodoo Banshee we have tested is a PCI card. How can a PCI card keep up with the AGP 2x cards of this world? The Voodoo graphics range of products all use a system whereby the actual textures used in games are retrieved from the onboard RAM on the card. Most 3D graphics controllers based on the AGP spec. will also use this method. The only card that doesn't do local texturing is the i740, which uses AGP's DME feature.

It is true that when using a local texturing scheme, 3D cards can achieve a much higher

throughput. Take the RivaTNT for example, it uses local texturing but also has the added benefit of being able to pull textures over the AGP bus if it needs to. The only problem with a PCI-only implementation is that when the textures for a scene get too large for the frame buffer, the graphics controller will have to page out textures to system RAM. Doing this over the PCI bus is very slow indeed. Expect performance to decrease more dramatically on a PCI Banshee than on an AGP RivaTNT when using masses of high-resolution textures.



Two passes for the Voodoo Banshee

What! The RivaTNT beats the Banshee board at Quake II! It's because of the missing second TMU. What are 3Dfx thinking? The Voodoo Banshee was never meant to compete in the high-end - that is what the Voodoo 2 is for. The Voodoo Banshee is aimed at the OEM market, and as such will be priced very competitively. It is a perfect card for those that are just getting into the 3D game scene, a Banshee-based card is the best mix of price and performance.

Next year 3Dfx plan to release their next high-end chip, expect it to do for 3D graphics what the original Voodoo1 did way back when.

RivaTNT falsely proclaimed King?

When nVidia initially gave us information on the RivaTNT chipset, they were talking about Voodoo 2 SLI performance with a fill rate of 250Mpixels per second. Why doesn't the RivaTNT live up to expectations?

The fact is that the current batch of RivaTNT chips are all manufactured on a .35 micron process and they can't be clocked at the original spec of 125MHz because of heat dissipation problems. All cards based on the RivaTNT will all be clocked at between 90 - 110MHz, depending on the OEM.

The fill rate of a 90MHz RivaTNT is around 190Mpixels per second - a far cry from the 250Mpixel/s promised. What nVidia plan to do is uncertain, but a version of the RivaTNT that will use a .25 micron process to

allow the clock rate to be raised to the original 125MHz spec will be eventually released. These chips won't be available until next year, and may be labeled RivaTNT Pro's. Still a .35 micron RivaTNT card is certainly still a card to be reckoned with.

Test Machine Configuration

Intel Pentium II 333 (Underclocked to 300MHz)
Abit BH6 motherboard
Quantum Fireball 4.2GB SE Hard drive (UDMA-2)
24x AOpen CD-ROM
TeraSound 64 PCI Sound card
Windows 98

Next Gen 2D/3D chipset comparison

| Card | | OpenGL | | DirectX | | |
|---|---------------|--------|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| | | Sin | Quake II | Turok | Incoming | Forsaken |
| Maxi Gamer Phoenix (Voodoo Banshee) | (640x480x16) | 33.8 | 57.9 | 84.1 | 59.97 | 178.96 |
| | (800x600x16) | 31.6 | 44.9 | 84.0 | 60.40 | 97.84 |
| | (1024x768x16) | 22.6 | 29.5 | N/A | 45.86 | 78.92 |
| Creative Blaster RivaTNT | (640x480x16) | 28.4 | 51.5 | 83.0 | 41.87 | 130.54 |
| | (800x600x16) | 28.2 | 49.6 | 82.5 | 45.39 | 124.18 |
| | (1024x768x16) | 27.5 | 37.3 | N/A | 35.83 | 75.79 |
| Matrox Millenium G200 (16MB) | (640x480x16) | 21.1 | 35.7 | 86.6 | 44.20 | 51.25 |
| | (800x600x16) | 18.8 | 26.6 | 69.3 | 38.06 | 40.58 |
| | (1024x768x16) | 14.1 | 18.4 | N/A | 26.64 | 32.47 |
| Diamond StealthII G460 (8MB) | (640x480x16) | 17.3 | 36.0 | 47.5 | 38.98 | 47.69 |
| | (800x600x16) | 14.9 | 25.2 | 24.5 | 32.77 | 35.00 |
| | (1024x768x16) | 11.9 | 14.8 | N/A | 21.17 | 23.94 |
| Diamond Monster 3D II Voodoo2 * reported for comparison purposes. | (640x480x16) | - | 56.7 | 84.3 | 57.21 | 88.53 |
| | (800x600x16) | - | 40.4 | 82.8 | 40.35 | 68.49 |

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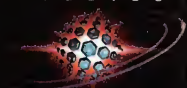
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Omikron: sinister 'n' sexy future chick in Blade Runner-esque post-apocalypse. How fresh. How new.

ECTS REPORT

Unfairly derided as "E3 The Lesser", the annual Euro games show is always a winner for sneak-peaks of the new stuff. By Steve Boxer

The European Computer Trade Show, aka ECTS, aka London's own mini-version of E3 brought its customary inimitable brand of organised chaos to the cavernous Olympia exhibition centre between the 6th and 8th of September. While there was little on show that hadn't already been seen at E3 - and some notable absentees including Electronic Arts — it was deemed a success by the European computer games industry, which is rubbing its hands in anticipation of a bumper Christmas.

THE GAMES

Amid the back-slapping, deal-making and schmoozing which most games companies point to as justification for their presence at ECTS, there were a few significant games on show, though. And none more so than *Sonic*

Adventure, Sega's update of the mythical blue hedgehog for its new Dreamcast console.

Now, we know Dreamcast isn't strictly a PC, but it has stolen so many bits from the PC that it might as well be granted honorary PC status. And, of course, it won't be difficult to port any Dreamcast game to the PC, although Sega wouldn't say whether *Sonic Adventure* will ever appear for the PC (let's hope that, if it does, we won't all have to buy PowerVR 2 cards to get it running properly). The game itself, on show in rolling demo form, was very impressive. Endowed with the migraine-inducing speed of early *Sonic* iterations for the Mega Drive and lush, crisp graphics that will make N64 owners wonder whether they're starting to develop cataracts.

As well as the classic *Sonic*-style game-play with some cute new twists - *Sonic*, for example, can do things like run down the sides of skyscrapers and hitch lifts on helicopters -

Sega has introduced the device of creating new characters, each with their own style of game-play. Thus, when you play *Knuckles*, you'll have to fly around a number of free-roaming stages collecting treasure and avoiding traps, and Sega claims that when playing certain characters, *Sonic Adventure* will operate pretty much as an RPG (the company was crowing about the fact that it'll be the first game in which *Sonic* and his mates actually talk). *Sonic Adventure* looked very much like a Super Mario 64-beater to us.

Shiny/Interplay's *Messiah* was, without a doubt the most admired game at the show. Since E3, it has come on dramatically in graphical terms, and it's starting to look like a coherent game. With sumptuous graphics and game-play which involves flying around disguised as a cute cherub, possessing in-game characters in order to perform missions and then making them kill themselves

(below) Swords 'n' Strategy with Braveheart. Blue face paint not included.
 (right) Will Messiah ever actually be released? Is it forever doomed to be an "almost finished" technology showpiece?



as imaginatively as possible when they've outlasted their usefulness, *Messiah* will create something of a splash when it shows up. Another Interplay game which created an ECTS buzz was *Giants*, a weird and wonderful third-person shooter/adventure which will be a contender for best-looking game ever when it appears. Interplay, wisely, seems to have gone for quality over quantity.

While you won't be able to get hold of *Messiah* or *Giants* this year, Infogrames' *Wargasm* should be in the shops in time for Christmas, and, judging by how it was looking at ECTS, you'd be a fool to miss it. Although developed by flight sim kings DID, it ain't a flight sim, although it does use DID's sim technology and outrageously obsessive knowledge of all things military. It is, of course, a battle-strat, and a startlingly realistic-looking, fully 3D one at that. DID, sticklers as they are for realism, have had no truck with futuristic settings and so on, and the result is something which pitches you into what you'd imagine a modern battlefield to be like. It also demands that you use realistic strategies - while infantry men, for example, are virtually undetectable, they move slowly, so you might have to call APCs to ferry them around, and so on.

Infogrames (which, incidentally, has, as widely predicted, killed off the Ocean brand)



also drew an admiring response to its third-person shooter *Outcast*, one of the first voxel-based games to go on sale. While it looked as though it had a pretty steep initial learning curve, it certainly should be distinctive and nice-looking when it launches, and it'll run on non-accelerated hardware. Infogrames' real-time (yes, real-time) RPG *Silver* should also keep the orc-and-goblin brigade happy and off the streets this Christmas. As well as possessing an unusually easy-to-use interface and undeniably impressive graphics, it's also rather amusing. Which is all too rare for an RPG.

Maintaining an ECTS tradition, Eidos' stand was so ram-packed all the way through the show that it was nigh impossible to catch

the merest glimpse of any of the company's games. This was partly due to the presence of an unfeasible array of hired large-breasted babes (none of whom were anything like as cute as the new Lara, Nell McAndrew, who was also present). Eidos made a couple of major announcements, namely the licensing of 18-year-old Liverpool mega-striker Michael Owen's name, which will grace *World League Soccer 99*, and the licensing of the name *Braveheart* which will be applied to the game being developed by Scottish whizz-kids Red Lemon formerly known as Tartan Army. If you like huge, mass sword-fighting bundles, then you'll adore *Braveheart*.

Eidos vehemently defended itself against allegations that *Tomb Raider III*, like TRII,

(top to bottom) Ominikron, Outcast, Wargasm

will be one of those 'Let's milk the franchise while it still makes money' games, pointing out that it'll be much less linear and, thanks to engine improvements, much nicer-looking than previous versions. Alas, we couldn't be bothered to queue to find out whether it looked better than the appalling E3 demo. Eidos' own *Ominikron* and *Urban Chaos* (under development by Mucky Foot) both looked even more like TRIII-beaters than they did at E3, though.

While Michael Owen himself was on the Eidos stand to mutter platitudes and clichés, Ubi Soft drafted in the legendary soccer manager Big Ron Atkinson to put the whipper-snapper in his place while giving his seal of approval to the company's new soccer management game *Football World Manager*. FWM should be just the job for all you frustrated European footie fans (if there are any of you Down Under), as it includes all the most obscure clubs in Europe and lets you poach kids from their youth teams.

Codemasters also had a big-name licensing announcement, having captured the diminutive Prince Naseem Hamed's signature for an eponymous boxing title due to appear next year. Naz himself, naturally, steered well clear of having to mix with the plebs. Game-starved cricket fans would do well to check out the new version of *Brian Lara Cricket*, which wipes the floor with any existing cricket games and innovatively introduces the idea of scenarios taken from real tests and one-dayers in which you, for example, have to score 22 of the last three overs and so on. Lara himself, of course, will be leading the Windies on a tour of Australia after you've ritually humiliated England (who may have beaten South Africa, but have no spinners, precious little bowling of any note and an inconsistent batting line-up) this winter...

Although not at the show proper, Psygnosis lifted the lid off Computer Artworks' *Evolva* for the first time, at an obscure exhibition in central London aimed at salesmen, retailers and so on. Computer Artworks is the brainchild of William Latham, who is one of the world's only true - not to mention indisputably the best - computer artists. You may recall the company's Organic Art screensaver, which was built on Latham's curious Artificial Life technology, which models genetics and life processes for artistic effect. *Evolva* won't arrive until next year, but it promises to be a bit special, both in graphical terms (as you'd expect from a man of Latham's artistic sensibilities) and game-play terms.

The game casts you as a geno-hunter, on a planet which has three continents and twelve separate lands, each of which has been infested with a weird alien parasite. While you have to go around killing the parasites (and often solving puzzles created by the terrain and your ability to manoeuvre), the fact that



you acquire each parasite's abilities when you kill it adds another twist to a game which promises to be open-ended, bizarre and engrossing. The game involves each player controlling four geno-hunters at any one time; sophisticated AI derived from Latham's Artificial Life technology should ensure that your fellow geno-hunters develop the ability to move, think and operate like you. Let's hope that *Evolva*, which has been through a few potential publishers already, doesn't get adversely affected by the turmoil currently prevailing at Psygnosis.

NEW HARDWARE

On the hardware front, nVidia was demonstrating its Riva TNT chip to all and sundry (from the Microsoft stand, rather bizarrely). The chip, which majors on multi-texturing and is currently probably the quickest 3D graphics accelerator on the market, should have filtered down onto boards from the likes of STB and Diamond and into the shops by the time you read this. Worth bearing in mind if you're stuck for Christmas present ideas...

The only other bit of hardware to catch the eye was Saitek's deeply bizarre Cyborg 3D Pad. Endowed with more D-pads, mini-joysticks, 'squeeze buttons', rotary throttles and triggers (there are four of the buggers) than you could shake a stick at, we found it a tad difficult to achieve a comfortable grip on this triangular lump of plastic, even after fiddling with the 'adjustable palm grips'. But maybe that's just us, and the Cyborg 3D Pad is, in fact, the future of input devices. It certainly looks the part.

In the end...

We'd love to be able to tell you what the likes of EA, GT Interactive and Activision were up to at ECTS, but unfortunately, none of them had any significant presence at the show, preferring to spend the money on that dread concept marketing, instead. The customary round of muttering about the show's proximity to E3, plus the spectre of a possible European version of E3 have led to speculation that ECTS, in its current form, may not survive much longer. Which would be a terrible shame, given the huge and pivotal contribution European companies continue to make to the games industry. Hell, even Nintendo, by appearing at ECTS for the first time, tried for the first time ever to give the impression that it gives a damn about markets which aren't Japan or the US. But post-ECTS carping always goes on, and we look forward to its return next year.

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System Requirements:

P100, 2MB Video card, Soundblaster 16 or compatible sound card, 100 megabytes of free hard drive space, 2 x CD ROM drive, Windows® 95



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The only authentic
police tactical sim
with real time action.
Sequel to smash hit
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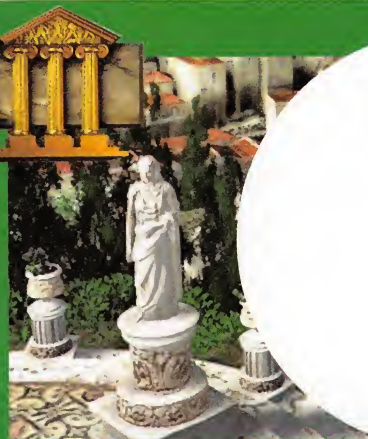
**Based on actual
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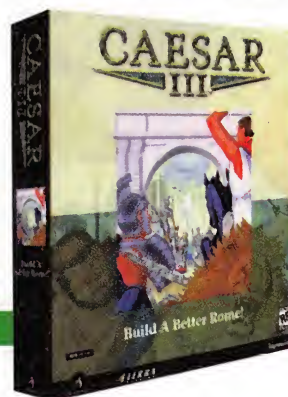


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Create, rule and defend a
Roman-era city of your own
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Enjoy multiple gameplay
objectives in a richer, truer
environment.



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BETTER ROME**



*Takes city simulation gaming
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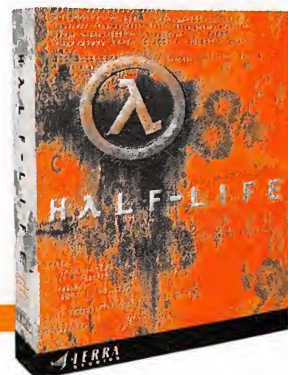


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Shoot. Live.**



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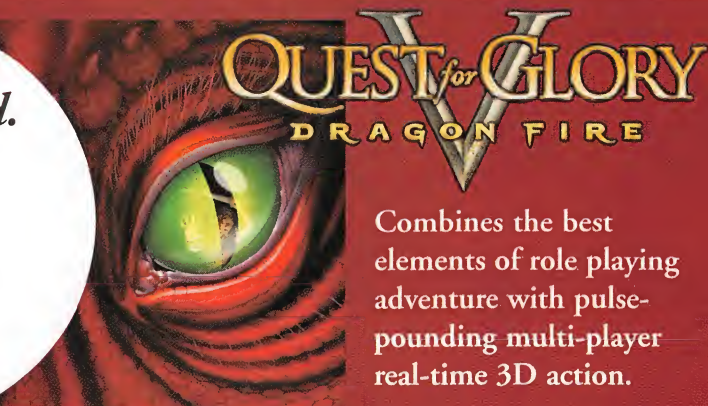
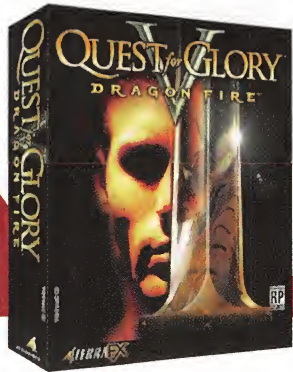


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Look out for these hot new Sierra titles at all major computer stores

HOT SIERRA SUMMER

Draw forth and sharpen your sword.

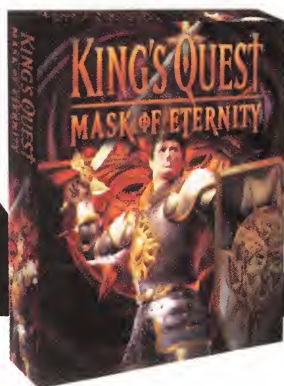


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Take a journey fraught with peril, mystery and enchantment.



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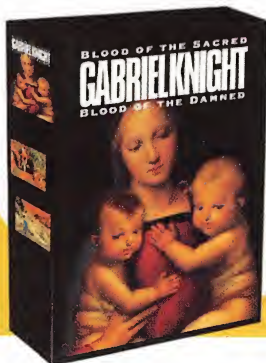


The best selling adventure series is back pushing adventure gaming to exciting new limits, giving players complete freedom of movement and camera control in an immense, real-time environment.

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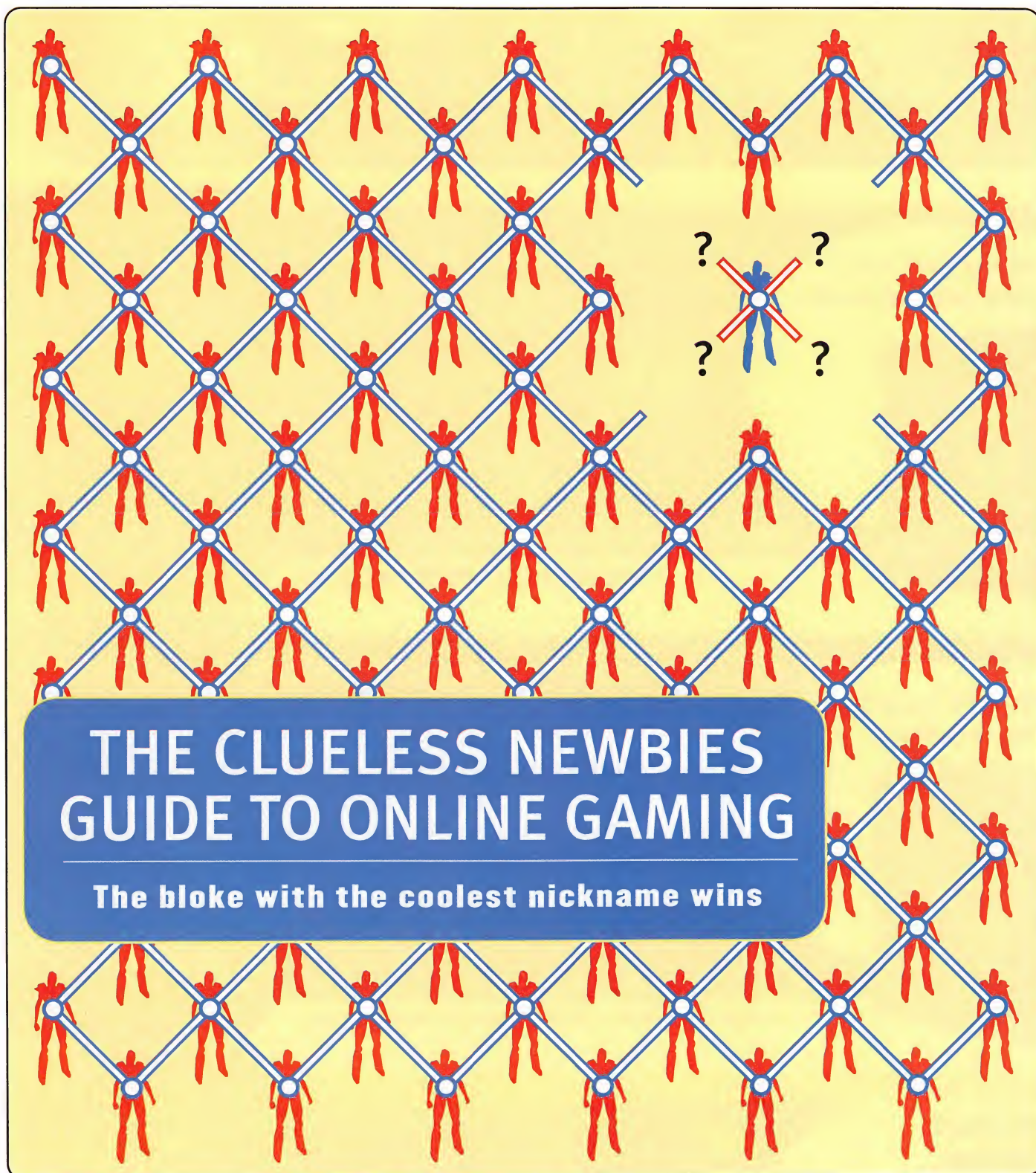


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THE CLUELESS NEWBIES GUIDE TO ONLINE GAMING

The bloke with the coolest nickname wins

It can be big and scary at first, but a new universe of fun awaits online. By Gareth Jones

Back in the dim, distant past of the late 1970's, an unassuming student at Essex University named Roy Trubshaw changed the face of computer game playing for ever. At the time, computers were still pretty much in the era of valves and those weird punch-card thingies, and by today's standards, his effort was laughably rudimentary.

It was, in essence, a few virtual inter-linked rooms where people could chat to each other, and it was given the acronym of MUD

for Multi-User Domain. In around 20 years, along with the exponential growth in the scope and popularity of the Internet, playing games of one sort or another has perhaps become one of the pre-eminent forces pushing communications technology to the limits, continually growing and evolving, creating worlds which are more and more believable and sophisticated. And fun!

I'm so confused!

The greatest asset of the person wanting

to play a multiplayer game is the Internet, but it's also the greatest hurdle to overcome - especially for the novice player. What do you choose? Where do you go? What do you say when you get there? What are the conventions? What, physically, are you required to do? How do you make sure that you're in a place with like-minded people, or playing against people of roughly the same ability?

It isn't as easy as it might first seem to get some multiplayer action happening, what with all the different servers, different setup



You need this (above) to get here (right). This black box of magic is a modem, your ticket to online living. Read the modem guide in this issue to find out more



*(top) Battle.net - the perfect place to get the most out of Starcraft and Diablo
(above) Part of the on-line login and setup help for Ultima Online*

required for different games, and a host of other troubling and confronting issues. So here you go then - a guide to some of the more popular gaming services and games available. Because there are, literally, hundreds of thousands of games out there we can only cover some of the more popular varieties, but we're also going to include some general tips and help that should get you up and playing whatever it is that you want in no time at all.

3 ways to play

First, let's begin with the most basic of basics. To join in the wonderful world of multiplayer gaming you will need a computer (preferably a P.C.), a modem, and an account with an ISP of your choice. Once these elements are in place, you're ready to go and play some multiplayer games. But what now? OK, there's basically three ways to play a multiplayer online game. Depending upon the type of game; you can connect to a dedicated server, create your own server or connect to a friend's, or use some form of gaming service. We'll cover the basics of each in turn, starting with dedicated servers. For an explanation of some of the technical terms and conventions, turn to our mini glossary boxout.

DEDICATED SERVERS

Dedicated servers are computers connected to the Internet that act as waypoints for your data in between people playing a game. There are many different types, and in most cases game companies set up and maintain these

servers as a service to those who have bought their game and want to play. To connect to the servers you will need to already be connected to the Internet through your ISP and, as always, the faster your connection (and modem) is, the better.

Things you need to know:

These are, for the most part, completely free - but that doesn't mean that your usual ISP charges won't apply.

Battle.net (www.battle.net)

With the dark days of the Diablo cheating fiasco behind them, Blizzard have transformed Battle.net into a slick example of Net gaming at its best. One click from either Diablo or Starcraft transports you directly into the Australian chat channel (hosted by the lovely people from Multiplay). From there you can observe a player's info and win/loss rate by just double clicking on their name. Most important are the latency indicators which clearly divide the lag free Australian players from Outer Mongolia gamers and their rubber band powered modems. Technical features include auto-downloading of game patches and Starcraft maps between players.

Activision's Activlink (www.activision.com)

Activision support all their multiplayer games through a free service. They are at present tooling up their web presence in Australia, but an Australian server is up and running thankfully. Currently it supports Interstate '76, Battlezone, Dark Reign, Mechwarrior 2, Heavy Gear, Netstorm, and the latest first person shooter to hit our shores, SiN. Connecting is exceedingly simple, as with most dedicated servers. Once you have an Activision multiplayable game simply select the Internet or TCP/IP option, and you'll see a list of all the Activision servers, just pick the one with the lowest ping time (almost always the Australian server), and join in.

Sierra's WON (www.won.net)

Sierra have been one of the last major game companies to jump on the free dedicated server bandwagon for their games, but their WON (World Opponent Network) is shaping up to be a quality service. They support most multiplayable Sierra games, including the rather fun Leisure Suit Larry's Casino. Again, it's simple to connect and use this free service - just click on the icon from within a Sierra multiplayer game's menu and you're away.

Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone or IGZ (www.zone.com)

Many were been quick to poke fun at Microsoft's pronouncement that "Microsoft Knows Games" when they began their push into the gaming market. As it turns out, though at first they didn't seem to know that much about games, they were damned quick to learn, and their Internet gaming service has grown quickly into a one stop fun shop for multiplayer fun.

Not only are all of Microsoft's games offered (Age Of Empires, Monster Truck Madness, etc), but they have also gained the rights to host games such as Jedi Knight, Forsaken, Mech Commander, X-Wing vs. TIE and more.

To use the service, it's a bit more complicated than some of the others. You will first need to sign up through their site



The Kali interface. The main window is the chat interface, the right side contains the names of the people on the server, and the icons on the bottom are for quick launching your games

(www.zone.com), and then enter through the web interface by following the instructions and downloading the software. Once there however, it's all rather simple for even complete newbies. Most games are free (once you have purchased the retail version, of course) to play on the Zone, but some are what Microsoft call "premium games" and you will have to pay to play them on an hourly basis. There are, however, a few free games like backgammon, chess, checkers, and the like as well.

Ultima Online (www.owo.com)

Simply the biggest and most audacious multiplayer game anywhere in the world. UO is an RPG where you take on the role of a character of your choice, then try to develop that character to the point where you're satisfied with him/her, all the while taking part in an environment comprised almost entirely of other real people.

It's a truly amazing game, and though it is plagued with problems such as immature and annoying player killers (PK's), ongoing costs, as well as substandard ping times, UO is still well worth a look. You will have to have a full retail version of the game to play, and though this does come with a one month subscription to UO you will need to keep paying after that on a monthly basis. Add to this the fact that there is no local server (with only a Japanese server on the horizon, which probably won't improve things much) and you're looking at a less than perfect experience.

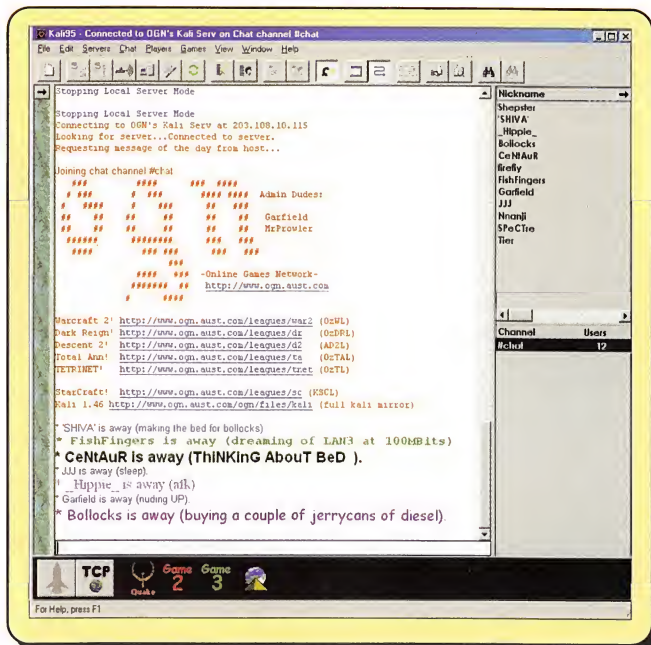
If you do have the money to spare though, it'll be something to tell the kiddies about in a few years time. Connecting and playing is relatively easy - just use the serial number you get from the box to log on, and connect to a server (the Pacific server is usually the best for Australians) once your character has been created. You will need to become conversant with the world of Britannia though, so be sure to read all the information on www.owo.com (the official site), as well as a few of the better fan sites, like The Beginners Guide (members.home.net/pauldrye/ultima/), The Ultima Vault (www.uovault.com), and the Tactics and Strategy Guide (uoss.stratics.com).

Kali (www.kali.net)

Kali doesn't work in the same way that other servers do. Kali is, in fact, just some software that was primarily designed to emulate the IPX protocol over the Internet (TCP/IP protocol). The shareware version can be downloaded from www.kali.net, but a one off fee of US\$15 is required to register for unlimited life-time use. Anyone is able to run Kali as a server, so there are literally thousands across the world, running different leagues, and of course, offering different performance levels depending upon bandwidth and location.

There are a number of great Kali servers

here in Australia, including OzEmail's new OGN service (it's number #583 in the list). To use Kali, just download the software, and then click on the large 'Connect to Kali' button. Once there, just troll through the list on the left of the screen until you find a good looking server, and connect away. Kali will automatically search your hard drive for installed



games that it officially supports (but Kali will be able to use any IPX networkable game), and from there it's just a question of finding a like-minded opponent through the chat screens.

THE GAMES

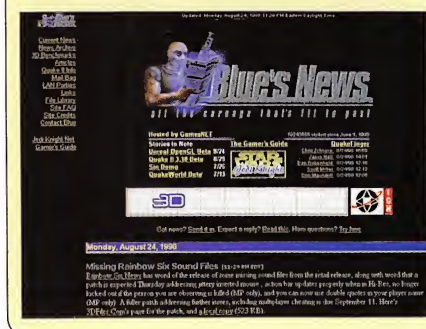
Unreal (www.unreal.com)

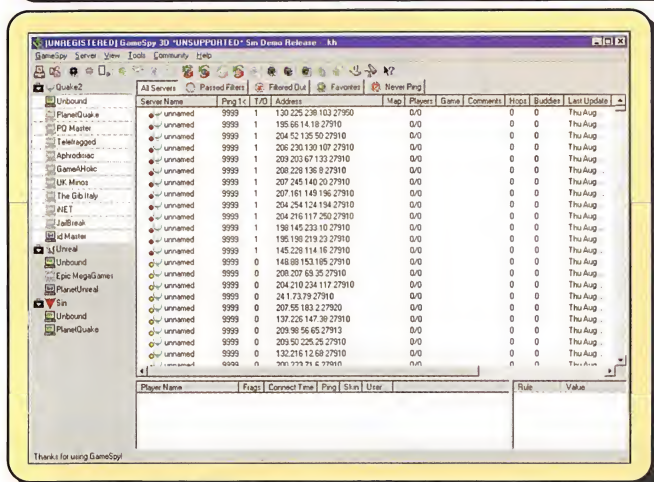
Is Unreal worth playing online at the moment? In a word, no. Even with two people connecting at 33.6k in a straight modem

THE QUAKE WORLD

Good places to go for Quake and Quake2-related news and information

www.stomped.com
www.planetquake.com
www.bluesnews.com
www.quake-au.net
www.quakeworld.net





Meet interesting people like this friendly lass (from Unreal) via Gamespy. Just fire it up & Gamespy finds the games-in-progress for you. Gamespy is THE standard for game finding, particularly first person action games like Quake and Unreal. Look for IP addresses that have 203 as the first digits - they're the Australian ones

to modem game, Unreal is unplayably laggy. If you want to multiplayer Unreal, get some friends together and play it on a LAN. Trying to play it online is just frustrating. It's a real pity, but forget about it, at least for now.

Quake (www.idsoftware.com)

The old standby, Quake is more than two years old now, but it's still going strong despite the deserved success of the sequel, Quake 2. There are still thousands of Quake servers worldwide, and plenty in Australia too. One word of warning though - if you're just getting into Quake now most of the people you'll be playing against online will be very experienced by now and you'll have a hard time keeping up at first.

For a listing of some of the most popular Australian servers, head over to Poo-fish's site at www1.tpgi.com.au/users/pdalla/ozquake.htm. You will need 'Qplug' (the plugin for your browser to see the servers), though there is a link from the site to get this program. Word of warning #2; at the time of going to press Internet Explorer did not support the Qplug plugin, so it's Netscape or nothing.

For general info on the Quake scene in Oz head to www.quake-au.net - it's the bible of Australian Quaking. There are plenty of ways

to actually play Quake online, but the easiest is to use a third party program called Gamespy (see the Gamespy section for info), or use the Qplug plugin and a link from a website such as Poo-fish's.

Quake2 (www.idsoftware.com)

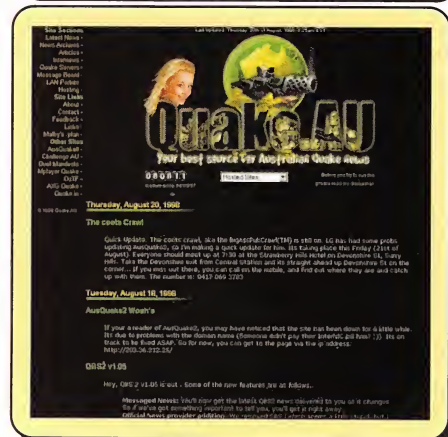
Poo-fish's site also holds information and server details for Quake 2 as well, which makes things nice and easy. You are able to launch a game from the web page, once you've picked a server to your liking, but you can also manually enter the I.P. into your Quake 2 "address book". Once you know the I.P. of a server, start up Quake, select the 'multiplayer' option -> "join network server" -> "address book". Then just type the I.P. address or host name into one of the free spaces, and press escape. Then just hit "refresh server list" and you should see information about the server - and from here it's simply a question of clicking on that server to join the game. That server's information will be kept in your "address book" so everytime you load up Q2 all you have to do is hit the refresh servers button and you'll get up to date information about that server. You can also join games using the Qplug plugin, as well as using Gamespy. "What's Gamespy?", I hear you ask...

Gamespy (www.gamespy.com)

Gamespy is a nifty shareware utility (and one which is well worth registering) that searches out a list of servers for Quake, Quake 2, Sin, Unreal, and Hexen 2 servers. The shareware version can be obtained from www.gamespy.com, and once downloaded and installed it will scan your hard drive for supported games, ping servers worldwide through a network of 'Master Servers' and tell you all about them, how far away they are, how many people are playing, what they're playing, what version of the game is being used, and so on.

You'll generally want to play on an Australian server, because they will be the fastest for you. And here's a hint - Australian servers generally have 203 as the first digits in their I.P. address (i.e. 203.27.67.5 would be an Australian server, 199.168.5.78 would not). It's often easiest to add all the 203 prefixed servers to your favourites list and discount the others, because it's just not worth your time to trawl through ever server worldwide - the only playable ones are generally Australian.

(below) Just a sample of some of the many Quake pages on the internet. The lower picture, Quake.au.net is practically a bible for Aus Quakers



There's a reason why dedicated servers are so popular though - it's because they're usually beefy machines with plenty of bandwidth to chew on that do nothing but channel the data out to you and your competitors computers. When your machine is acting as your own server, it really doesn't take much for things to slow down, so you'll find that any more than two or three people using a server such as this is about the limit. However, for many strategy games, especially those of the turn based variety you shouldn't encounter too many problems (provided the network code supplied with the game is reliable).

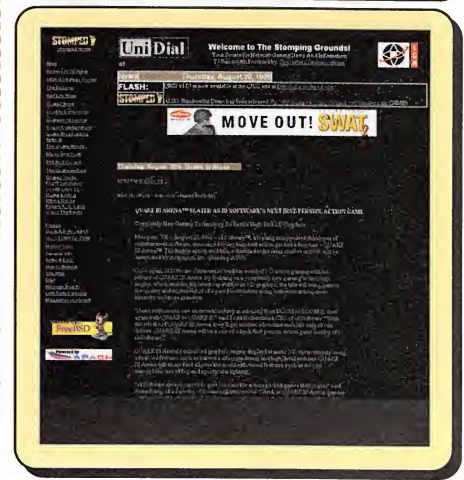
Kali is a magnificent program. Along with all the other facilities mentioned above, you can also run the program as your own private server, and to set this up is as easy as pie. Once you've started the program all you need to do is go to Servers -> Private server, and that's it. Kali will even tell you your own I.P. address, so you can tell your friends what to connect to. It's that simple, really, and it works too. Once they're in, you get the usual

(below) Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone has quickly become one of the most popular gaming connection sites anywhere in the world, but you'll still need to find local opponents for a fast game



GAMING SERVICES

The results are the dreaded terms 'latency' and 'lag' - where your computer is forced to sit and wait for game information to



come through the line, and then to go back again. There is a way around this though - using a pay-for-play gaming service. There's two varieties, either to use the internet but

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All cars sustain damage, and the more damage you have, the more your performance is affected.

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- Up to eight different types of terrain per track will affect the car's behaviour.



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- Free Internet Game Service

www.speedbusters.com



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optimise the way data is transmitted between the servers and your computer, or just to make your own mini-internet purely for game playing. Both have their merits, and there's a major provider in each area, Multiplay and Wireplay.

Multiplay - www.multiplay.com.au

Multiplay has been around for a good few years now, and has gone through a number of incarnations and changes during that time. Right now, the service is great, the people that run it are dedicated gamers themselves, and the price should suit even the most meagre budget.

To set up and install, just download the client software from the Multiplay site (www.multiplay.com.au) or one of our cover CD's and run the setup program. You will need to fill out a form to join (which can be found at www.multiplay.com.au/join.html), but there's no need to jump straight in with your credit card. Multiplay are nice enough to offer a free service for those who want to try things out to see if they like it, and it's probably a good idea to take this option at least at first.

Once your entry form has been completed (either for the free service or the subscription-based one), it's simply a question of installing and starting the Multiplay/TEN client software. You will then be faced with a login screen asking for your screen name and password, which will have been supplied to you at the completion of the signup process. Simply enter these and click on connect, at which point you'll probably be faced with a little wait while the client auto-updates itself to the latest version.

Once this is complete, you're in, and all you have to do is configure your games and get used to navigating around with your client. Happily enough, Multiplay staff have created a comprehensive help guide to getting started, which can be found at www.multiplay.com.au/ross/guide. This should provide all the information you need to get started, and there's info and help at www.multiplay.com.au/community/g80226_newbies.html, as well as http://www.multiplay.com.au/1997/html/games/games_client.html too.

Multiplay Free Service games:

Quake (Shareware and Retail)
Shadow Warrior (Shareware)
Duke Nukem 3D (Shareware)
Starcraft (through Australian Multiplay Battle.net server)
Diablo (through Australian Multiplay Battle.net server)

Full Multiplay Access

Cost: \$10 per month
Games: (both Shareware and Retail supported in all games)
Quake
Shadow Warrior
Duke Nukem 3D

Myth
Total Annihilation
WizWar
C&C: Red Alert
Diablo
StarCraft

Wireplay - www.wireplay.com.au

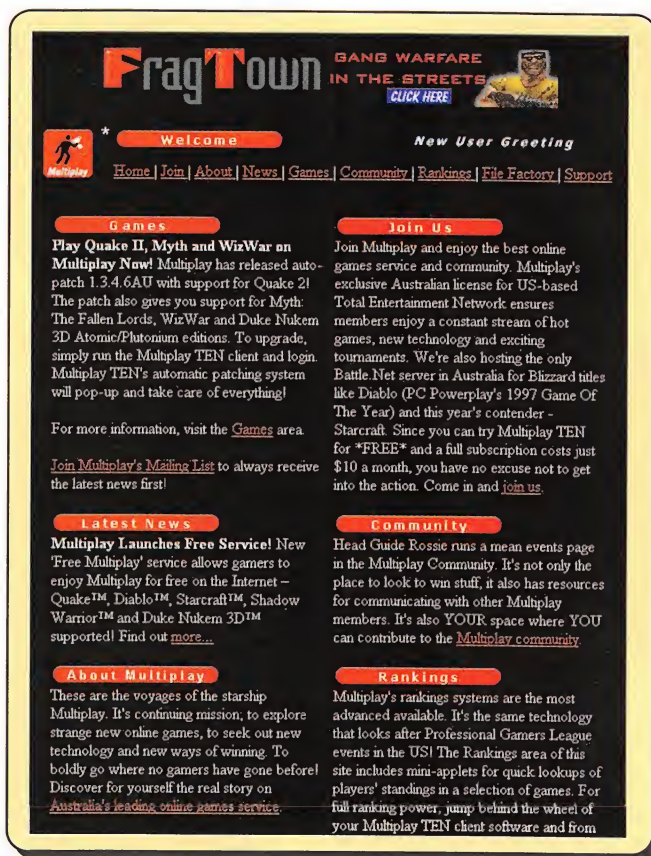
Wireplay is an interesting new idea for the world of multiplayer gaming - it uses its own network for games rather than the Internet, thereby reducing latency and lag and providing smooth and fast gameplay. So, rather than dial-in to your ISP, you dial directly into the Wireplay modems and computers using their proprietary software.

Many of our past and



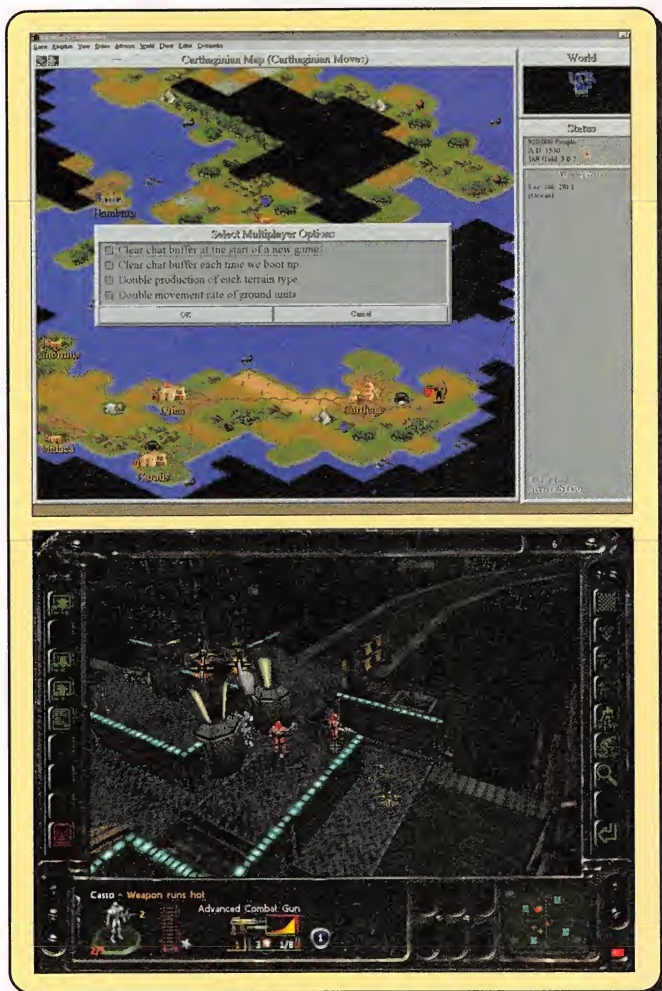
future cover CD's have carried the Wireplay Client software, but you can order a free CD from Wireplay by filling out the form at www.wireplay.com.au/order.shtml, or download the client directly from www.wireplay.com.au/install.shtml. After that, all you need to do is follow the directions and you'll be set.

At present, Wireplay only offers dial-up connections in the Sydney and Melbourne metropolitan areas, though there are plans in place for POP's to be placed in other major centres and regional areas in the future. If you are lucky enough to live in either Sydney or Melbourne though, Wireplay might be just the thing you're looking for. It is more expensive than other like



Wireplay is run by Telstra, and benefits from their technical wizardry and mountains of cash. By using their own network for games instead of the internet, Wireplay can provide faster and smoother gameplay

services, but you're paying for a premium experience. Ping times will be lower, latency will be lower, and there's around 50 games on offer to play, a ranking system, prizes and competitions, along with a growing community of people to play against. There are a couple of pricing plans in place at the moment; \$20 will get you unlimited access time each month, or you can pay \$10 for 5 hours access per month (plus \$2 for each hour extra).



Though nowhere near as popular as the fast paced action games, turn based strategy games often make for fantastic fun over the internet

Games offered:

Armoured Fist 2
Blood
Blood Shareware
Descent 2
Doom (v1.9)
Doom 2
Doom Shareware (v1.666)
Duke Nukem 3D
Forsaken
Forsaken Demo
G-Name
Jedi Knight
Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith
Netmech
Outwars
Quake
Quake 2
Recoil Demo
Redneck Rampage
Shadow Warrior
Shadow Warrior Shareware
Ultimate Doom
Uprising
Urban Assault Trial
Virtua Fighter 2
Virtua Fighter 2 Demo
Actua Golf 2
Actua Soccer Cub Edition
Big Red Racing
Euro 96
MS Cart Precision Racing
MS Cart Precision Racing Trial
Nascar 2

Age Of Empires
Age Of Empires Trial
Command & Conquer
Dark Omen
Final Liberation
Fragile Allegiance
Incubation
Incubation Demo
Red Alert
Red Alert Aftermath
Sid Meier's Gettysburg
Star Wars Rebellion
Total Annihilation
TA: The Core Contingency
Warcraft 2
Warcraft 2 Demo
Wireplay Black Maria
Wireplay Chess
Wireplay Cribbage
Wireplay Nap
Wireplay Poker
Wireplay WordZap
Comanche 3
Daytona Deluxe
Daytona Deluxe Demo
EF2000
Extreme Assault
F22 Air Dominance Fighter
FA18 Korea
Flight Simulator 98
Formula Karts
Monster Truck Madness 2
Monster Truck Madness 2 Trial
Terminal Velocity

Glossary:

Dedicated server: A machine connected to a network (either the internet or a LAN) that does nothing but send and receive data for a game to all the players involved.

Hop: The internet is built a little like a road system. To get from one point to another, you have to follow the road (or data path) rather than being able to go straight to your destination. For your data to reach its destination it needs to go through a number of 'switching stations'. Each time your data reaches a switching station it is told which station to go to next, and so on until it reaches the server. Each station is called, in the vernacular, a 'hop'. The less 'hops' your data needs to go through to reach a game server, the faster and smoother that your game will play.

I.P. Address: An I.P. address is the unique 'name' given to each computer using the TCP/IP protocol on a network, including the internet. It will always be in the form of four numbers separated by full stops (for example 203.88.8.65). You can find out your I.P. Address by typing 'winipcfg' at a DOS prompt whilst you're connected to the Internet.

IPX: Another networking protocol, similar to TCP/IP. IPX isn't used for Internet games, and has only been used for Local Area Networks. Kali translates IPX packets into TCP/IP packets and back again to allow IPX games to be played online.

ISP: Internet Service Provider. Your ISP is your gateway to the internet. When you dial in with your modem to their computer and log on, you are accessing the internet through their machines and bandwidth. Their machines will be your first 'hop' when you send data out (see 'hop').

Latency/Lag: Words to strike fear into any gamer's heart. Latency and Lag are what happens when the data being sent by or retrieved from your computer takes a long time to reach its destination because of all the other data packets on the internet that are also queuing up to get to their destination. The Internet's equivalent of a traffic jam.

Mod/TC: Mod is short for modification, and TC is an acronym for Total Conversion. Both are most commonly used with Quake and Quake 2, because these games are particularly well suited to modifications. Essentially, a third party (i.e. Not anyone connected with the design of the game) modifies the code of a game so that it has new properties. A Total Conversion is just a complete overhaul of a game, so that it bears little resemblance to the original product. There are thousands of Mods and TC's for many games available, and to multiplayer these modifications or conversions you will need to download and install extra files to play.

Ping: A measure of how long it takes data to reach another computer. Useful to gauge how smooth and fast your multiplayer games will work. Generally, for a fast action game such as Quake a ping time of less than 300ms (milliseconds) is playable, though anything less than 200ms is optimum.

Plugin: A plugin is an application that works in tandem with your Web Browser to add extra features that the browser alone does not support. All modern browsers have a 'plugins' directory where you can add as many or as few as you like, once you have downloaded them. You don't need to search the web for plugins though, when you encounter a page that requires a plugin it will tell you, and (almost always) provide a link to download and install the necessary software.

P.O.P.: Point Of Presence. A POP is simply a place where an ISP or gaming service has a local access point available. For instance, Wireplay has a POP in Sydney and Melbourne, so it's only a local call to connect to Wireplay from those areas.

TCP/IP: Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol. This is the protocol by which data is transferred over the internet. It is gradually becoming the protocol of choice for multiplayer gaming, either through a network or the Internet.



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"The Life and Times
of One Loopy Space
Janitor"



Introducing

Ed

The Space
Shaker



Cute hey?!

But don't be misled by
his unassuming charms.

This guy's a
Kompletely Krazy KLUTZ!!

While
floating around in his
dinky spaceship, Ed
clumsily spills some
strange tonic all
over the earth.
Result...

Psychadelic
Soup



And Ed is left
to clean up
the mess.

So avoiding
violent Veges,

Warning:
This Chronicle
may offend
vegetarians

Oh No!!!!

(that's Suzy,
she's the babe)



**Entering
Warped
Worlds,**



**Slipping
down Sangria
Glaciers.**



**Ed
Swims,**



**He
flies,**



**And carves the
slopes like
only one
madkat
alien can...**



**Can our would-be hero
fight for goodness and
retrieve the Tonic from
the Evil..**



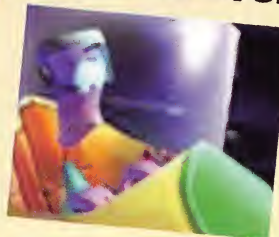
Grogh the Hellish!!

**And after
seeking
comfort in
his favourite
chocolate
bar, he turns
into...**



Super ED

**Will he ever work out how to
start his Space
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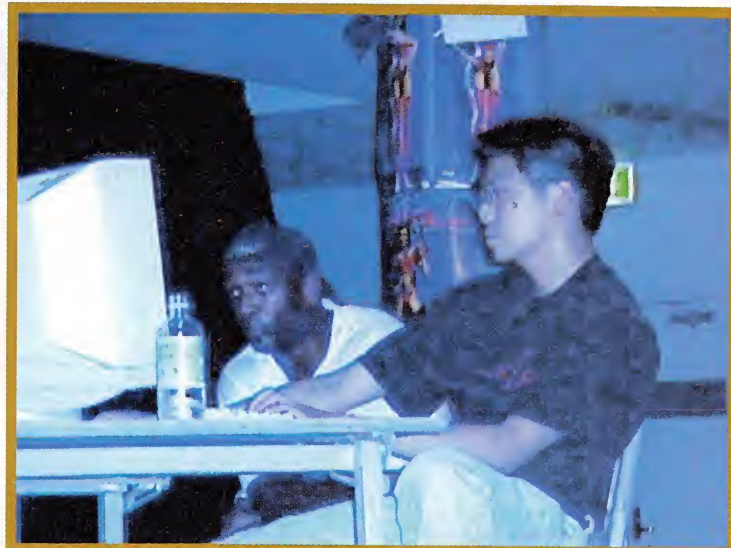
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GAMER NIGHT #2: SIN



Activision have hit on a winner with their Gamer Nights. Previously we'd been treated to an exceptional Quake 2 Gamer Night, with Paul Steed and Tim Willits coming out, putting on a great show, and telling us all about the game as well as showing us some really cool stuff and being great people. Expectations were high for the Sin gamer night.

Around 1500 people waited patiently for the show to begin - would we see the final game? Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. Instead, we got Activision Product Managers reading from a prepared script about the story behind Sin, and then running around in two new deathmatch levels trying (rather poorly) to shoot each other.

Still, it was nice to find out a little more about the game (even if the Product Managers couldn't answer even fairly simple questions). Next time, Activision plan a night for Civilization: Call To Power; this is an in-house title and we've met the team in Activision's HQ in LA, to say they're pumped about their game is an understatement, so expect some excitement on the night.

Details to be announced soon.

Just before the carnage kicked off, we grabbed Activision's Americans and played 20 questions, here are the answers they got right...

John Cibulski (associate producer) and **John Tam** (production coordinator).

What do you see as Sin's strengths?

JT: A captivating experience. Sin, as a whole package, is something that's reacting to you. What we've seen before in games is totally static. If you do something, the exact outcome will follow. You'll finish this level. You'll accomplish this, kill so many enemies and you'll find so many secrets. But Sin evolves around the way you play - sometimes in subtle ways, sometimes in obvious ways. It's a game that you can keep playing over



and over before exhausting possible outcomes, and still get a fresh experience from it each time. It also encourages the player to really work on tactics.

JC: Creative new weapons. The artists have used a very attractive colour scheme in the levels. On some levels there are plenty of enemies, and you'll be kept on your feet a whole lot. On other levels, you really have to slow down and explore the place. The guys (developers) have aimed to balance straight-out action with level interaction. It's also the kind of game that isn't designed to appeal only to the hard core first-person shooter gamer. It's for everyone.

JT: Sin is a also totally fresh take on the genre. You're not in space, you're not shooting aliens. While Sin's story line unfolds to be a little different, it brings gamers back to territory they're familiar with - Earth. The game's full of things people can associate with from their everyday lives. You can go



into bathrooms, use ATM's and transfer funds (which is actually required in the game) - gamers will find themselves running around, goofing off, and having fun. Players can also trick and try to out-smart their opponents in the game, and this works in single and multi player. You can sit and talk about so much AI, so much realism, reactive textures, whatever else you want to talk about. But really, all it boils down to is Sin being a dynamic, immersive and a most definitely fun experience.

JC: I have to echo what Jon's saying. What you do is create your own experience, and that's what Action Based Outcomes are all about. There are multiple outcomes, based on what you do in the game. You can play the game over and over, and get a different experience every time. For example, you hit and enemy and wound him. He'll run off to go revive himself, and then come back and hunt you down, maybe with a few of his friends. In this way it's not just you basically reacting to the game - the game is actually reacting to you. Sometimes it's subtle, but gamers will be able to appreciate that.

So the vibe around Sin is good?

JC: Oh yeah. People are excited. When we released the demo, all we saw was hit after hit at the company web page. People kept crashing the server trying to get their hands on it. The feedback has been great - people love Sin. And the haven't seen all of it yet.

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PLAY STATES

The real
"coming soon"
games.

Adventure/RPG

David Wildgoose

As the first-person 3D genre gets staler with every subsequent release - yeah, great graphics guys, but where's the game? - several developers are beginning to explore the possibilities these often extraordinary 3D engines are opening up. Genres are mutating and games are hybridising. Distinctions are blurring and overlapping. Categorisation is becoming redundant. Games have turned into The Thing.

Chief among the revolutionaries are the next generation RPGs. Incorporating disparate elements from action titles, tactical strategy, adventure games, whatever, these are games that bear so little resemblance to traditional RPGs that they end up being what RPGs should have been all along. They're multi-



genre beasts hoping to provide the total and all-encompassing gaming experience - and with gratuitous cleavage shots nowhere to be seen!

Ion Storm's *Anachronox* illustrates this revolution perfectly. Truly anachronistic, this is an RPG that uses the *Quake* 3D engine and is being developed by a former id Software level designer. Set in the eponymous future city, Anachronox will feature heavy NPC interaction, take place in a large non-linear play area and sport influences from the likes of *Final Fantasy VII* - apparently its designer Tom Hall's favourite game, which is a good sign if you ask me.

Also from Ion Storm, and potentially an even more impressive game, is *Deus Ex*, where you become a govt anti-terrorist agent. One of the game's key design elements revolves around letting the player determine exactly how they wish to negotiate the dilemmas thrown up by the plot. Dynamic character relationships are essential, allowing you to pick and choose your friends and enemies alike. The real world setting means realism is a high priority, especially when locations include places like the White House, Hong Kong and even Area 51. Warren Spector, the producer of *Ultima VII*, *Underworld* and *System Shock*, heads the development.

Lastly, from France and Infogrames this time is *Outcast*. Part sci-fi/fantasy, part Gallic lunacy, Outcast looks like *Time Commando*, but will play like nothing else. Promises that the advanced AI and sensitive plot scripting will make for an as-yet-unseen depth of interaction both sound extremely exciting.

Action

George Argy

Current Game Versions:

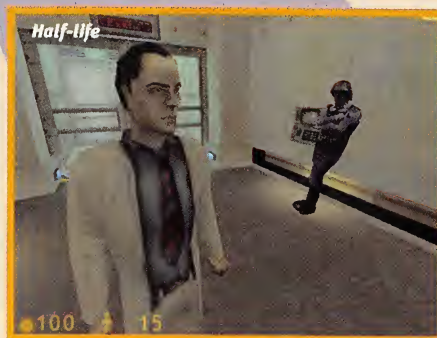
Doom Legacy: 1.25

QuakeWorld: 2.30

Quake2: 3.19

Unreal: 2.09

It's going to be a glorious year for us 3D gaming fans. I've been playing the *Half-Life* beta for the past month and simply cannot tear myself away. You can safely dispense with any concerns you had about this game being just another one of the many clones that we've seen, because this game is simply awesome. Speech interaction with NPCs, real world physics and detailed character animation and movement - and all this from the Quake2 codebase! But enough of all this talk - there's even more on the way!



The second most exciting announcement since the release of the Lara Croft 'action' figures is that *Aliens vs Predator* is set to become a reality. Forget your stupid rumours of a movie, which are about as likely as a Doom movie right now, this rumour has cold, hard screenshots as evidence. And man do they look good.

There are more Unreal engine games coming out than you can poke a big, shiny, erm - gun at. *Klingon Honour Guard* is just around the corner (based on the Star Trek universe, it is), but even more exciting for old-school pen and paper RPGers is that *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* is to be transformed into a 3D shooter, based on the gothic-punk world of the Werewolf game. Even scarier than werewolves is a new hunting game called Pro Hunter that looks like Deer Hunter on steroids - or is that Unreal on acid? Either way, your objective is not to destroy aliens and get off a godforsaken planet, but instead to shoot at fluffy white bunnies with double-barrelled shotguns. Makes for a challenge, it does.

As for original games, Terminal Reality has announced a game called *Nocturne*. Gameplay has not been finalised, but the plot seems to revolve around you hunting down vampires and zombies. Oh, and the engine has cool lighting and fog effects. A game with a name that befits its promise is *Experience*, developed by The Whole Experience, Inc. Experience is an outdoor first-person shooter rather than a corridor affair, that has you exploring mountains and forests rather than sewers and dungeons.

Strategy

Brett Robinson

Current Game Versions:

Total Annihilation: 3.1

Dark Reign: 1.4

Starcraft: 1.02

Age of Empires: 1.0a

The first quarter of 1999 is shaping up to be a very exciting time for RTS gamers. Cavedog Entertainment's current project, **TA: Kingdoms**, is scheduled for a mid-March release. Set in a medieval fantasy world, it will incorporate some rather interesting features like the ability to command one of four factions. Each faction will be based on the elements of either Fire, Water, Air or Earth. Other innovations include obvious visual changes for veteran units, and the ability to summon omnipotent patron



deities. The fact that it will support hardware acceleration will be a huge plus for TA fans with not-so-fond memories of TA's dependence on processor speed.

Still on the RTS front, and Creative Assembly are developing a game in conjunction with Australian-based Dreamtime Entertainment. **Taisho** (the current working title) will be set in Feudal Japan and will feature warfare on a huge geographical scale; the objective being to wrest control of Japan from the multitude of Shogun ruling the provinces. Battles will involve literally thousands of warriors ranging from humble foot soldiers to elite Samurai and Ninja. Developed in almost total secrecy, the game has been generating a lot of excitement amongst the select few who have had the good fortune to see it in behind-closed-doors press previews at the recent ECTS. Electronic Arts, the game's publishers, claim that the game will transcend C&C2 in both gameplay quality and overall popularity. Visuals in a pre-alpha version, shown to PC PowerPlay several months ago, easily surpassed those of Warhammer: Dark Omen. Taisho is due for release in March 1999 and is definitely one to look out for.

Bad news for those of you who are eagerly awaiting the release of Westwood's **C&C2** (and who isn't?). The official word is that its release has been postponed until early 1999. Something of a double-edged sword in that we won't get the game for several months, but the finished product may be far superior to what it would have been had Westwood stuck to the original date.

Sims

Maj. Ian Lindgren

The good news just keeps getting better I'm afraid! Here we are, just about to get swamped with the latest and greatest flight sims of all time, and what do I find? There's more to come!

Rumours abound that Jane's will be the first to produce a sim that integrates two environments with 688i/AEGIS in early 99. You'll be able to hunt as a team, destroyer and SSN! This will see gamers working in partnership performing Anti-Submarine Warfare around the AEGIS combat system and the SPY-ID multi-function phased array radar. Good stuff! The reading alone will keep you busy for a week. By the way, I've also heard whispers that SSI are planning a release of **Silent Hunter 2** for June 1999!



News hot off the press is that **M1 Tank Platoon 2** has competition! Wings Simulations has confirmed the release date for **Panzer Elite** as February 1999. This game follows the initial skirmishes between the German and American forces through North Africa, to Sicily, Italy and Normandy. The graphics and object modelling appear to be hot, better than M1TP2 on first impressions. You'll be able to knock down a building's wall and hide inside to ambush. The Infantry move with you in half tracks, and when assaulting objectives, throw smoke before crossing open ground. They also engage in close combat with tanks and other infantry. Machine guns, hand grenades, Panzerfausts, Bazookas, Panzerschrecks; I can't wait for the beta!

Psynosis is also expected to release **Nations: Fighter Command** in March 1999. It will sport possibly the most advanced graphics engine yet. A WWII sim with detail to the max! Close up its tail will be Kesmai's new Air Warrior project, **Jet Warrior-Vietnam**. No release date yet, but players will be able to fly several types of US Air Force and Navy aircraft, including the F-4 Phantom and A-6 Intruder, and also MiG interceptors, such as the MiG-21 "Fishbed." Although the designers are looking to include the mammoth B-52 Stratofortress heavy bomber, it's not yet clear if players will be able to fly it into battle or just escort it to its targets.

Lastly, some release dates: **European Air War** 5/11/98, **Top Gun: Hornet's Nest**: 19/11/98, and **Falcon 4.0** December. Watch your six!

Online

Gareth Jones

There's a growing following behind the so-called 'second generation' of Online RPG's, those that are following the general theories behind **Ultima Online**, but promising to eradicate those bugs and problems that have plagued UO, and seen a substantial number of potential players either leave the game or give the whole thing a miss. One of the most eagerly anticipated is **Everquest** from 989 Studios (www.everquest.com), now in the closed beta development stage. The game certainly looks pretty enough (with 3D acceleration) to warrant the attention it's getting, and developers 989 Studios claim that it will run 24/7, won't have the PK problem, won't be significantly laggy, will feature all of the interactivi-



ty and dynamism of an old-school text based MUD, won't have 'hackable' player files, and (hallelujah!) will come with a printed manual. It all sounds good doesn't it - too good to be true, perhaps? Let's hope not, because Ultima Online really woke a lot of people up as to what a massively multiplayer game could be, even if it hasn't quite lived up to the potential yet, and UO's 'The Second Age' doesn't look to be doing much to change the situation. There's no news, of course, on how many servers Everquest will be running on, or their geographical locations as yet.

On a slightly different track (though if it works with MMORPG's it would be fantastic!), a Canadian group have come up with what has to be one of the most anticipated developments for online games - dynamic speech. Their software is called **Battlefield Communicator**, and one of the best facets of it is that it will, potentially, work with any game you care to mention. The software sits in the background of the game, and sends out your speech to the host server. You will need a full duplex sound card (though not a duplex modem, this is not a DSVD/SVD thing) and a microphone. At the moment, a free Beta version is available from www.Shadowfactor.com, and though I haven't been able to verify that the program works yet, if it does it's going to be a magnificent new addition to online gaming.

Amen: The Awakening

Category Action/Adventure
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Cavedog
Available 2nd Quarter 99

The gameplay for Amen would seem to be a bit of a cross between a first person shooter and an adventure game like Tomb Raider. It will be a first person perspective game, and will involve plenty of shooting, but Cavedog sound serious when they say that the game will be plot driven, will feature plenty of puzzles, an RPG-style inventory system, and a gameplay model that will reward you for not shooting everyone! Other characters in the game will either be neutral or hostile, so often it will be more expedient to sneak past or just ignore them rather than ripping them all to shreds. It's not



Afflicted male

really clear just yet how the other characters will interact with you, but Cavedog are promising some level of interaction - and as always they're also promising an impressive level of AI (running away, hiding, moving in squads, and so on) in the NPC's.

The storyline goes that on

Christmas Eve in 2032 half the population of the world goes insane. After a period of anarchy, death and destruction, those remaining alive and sane band together to combat the mysteriously 'afflicted' people. Outnumbered and outgunned, the sane group calls in a top rung elite mercenary by the name of George 'Wildcard'



The premise might be totally weird, but the gameplay looks to be quite a lot of fun

Hamlen. So your task is to find out why half the world went crazy for no appreciable reason, solve the problem and return life to normal. There are over 17 'acts' each of which will contain two or three 'levels' of gameplay. It's almost a given that any new game will feature a breathtakingly new engine capable of ludicrously cool new things, and Amen is no different (with the snippy name of the "Amengine") a fully destructible environment, a body-damage monitoring system, huge levels built to scale (including aircraft hangers, skyscrapers, and more), dynamic lighting, huge outdoor environments, and heaps more.

Shane Warne Cricket '98 (AKA Brian Lara Cricket '98)

Category Cricket sim
Players 1-4
Publisher Codemasters
Available 2nd Quarter 99

Warney! Woaaaaa-nee! Woaaaaa-nee! Ah, the glorious game of cricket, with all the characters, all the fat guys, all their beer drinking exploits, the endless statistics, the lazy summer afternoons, and the alcohol laden fans streaking over the pitch during the quieter moments. The world needs a decent cricket sim, and by God it looks like we might finally have one on our hands.



Shane Warne Cricket is a relatively serious sim. It's got over 240 real players from every first-class cricket playing nation, 46 stadiums to play in which are all accurately modelled upon their real life counterparts, and you will also be offered a number of ways to play the game such as tests, test series, World Series

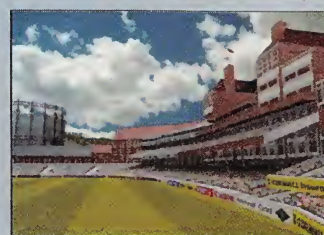
tournaments and a complete World Cup comp, as well as individual matches - both in day and night (or day/night).

As far as appearance and the general aesthetic goes, Warney Cricket looks to have the goods. We've only



been able to lay our hands on an alpha PSX version so far, but even for a toilet seat console game the animation of the players looked great, bowlers did so with a fluid action, and the batsmen's shots were extremely realistic. And then there's the commentary, provided by Jonathan Agnew and Big Geoff Boycott. Agnew is a well respected commentator over in the old dart, sort of an English Richie Benaud, and Boycott will be known to cricket fans here for his...colourful comments ("You've got to have a big bum to be a fast bowler" is our personal favourite).

Top it all off with multiplayer for up to 4 players (network only at this stage), and the option to



Finally, a decent cricket sim, and it should be out in time for... winter next year. Ah, well.

replay classic matches from the past, joining in at a crucial point, and a detailed 3D graphical environment (no details on 3D card support as yet though), and you're looking at what could well be the best cricket sim ever. If only they'd bring back Boony though...

Dungeon Keeper 2

Category RTS
Players 1-16
Publisher Bullfrog/EA
Available Mid '99

Despite the loss of the legendary Peter Molyneux when he decided to form his own company, Bullfrog have pushed ahead with the sequel to the well received and very playable Dungeon Keeper. The essence of the game will be retained, and it seems that the developers have decided not to muck about too much with the previous formula, though there will be significant additions and enhancements for the sequel.

The graphics of the original DK were rather substandard, really. DK2 will feature a 3D environment, with out of the box Direct3D acceleration (as well as 'other popular 3D standards', say Bullfrog). The monsters, and your foes will be comprised of polygons rather than the ugly old sprites of the original, and there will be more



of them too. Extra minions at your command in the sequel will include the Black Knight, Dark Elves, Salamanders, and a few others yet to be announced, totalling 30 monsters in all for you to throw at those pesky Heroes. Each creature will have attributes and strategies for combat too, so for example a large demon can

be used to block a corridor while your archers line up behind and plug the goodies full of arrows, and so on.

You'll also have plenty more traps at your disposal, with things like Indiana Jones style rolling boulders, spiked pits, and plenty more too. Some more advanced traps will require magic (Mana) to acti-



Ahh, that's better. Bullfrog are doing away with the ugly sprites of the original in favour of polygons.

vate, another new feature for the game. There's also a few new rooms, like the Casino, where your creatures go for R&R - and lose their wages back to you on the heavily fixed gaming tables, and a training room for your minions can improve their nastiness.

The original was a delicious twist on the age-old Dungeon Hack, but ugly graphics and a few annoying gameplay flaws let it down quite a bit. The sequel looks to have fixed the flaws, added plenty of new cool stuff, and looks great to boot. Top stuff! Can't wait for this one.



Category RTS
Players 1-8
Publisher Megamedia
Available 1st Quarter 99

It's a familiar tale that will endear the developers to green movements anywhere; a cautionary tale of continuing ecological destruction renders the surface uninhabitable when the polar ice-caps melt, and the whole world floods. As the survivors built their underground caverns, a new mineral was discovered - Corium 276, rare and incredibly valuable. Being the

greedy pigs that we are, the humans separated into groups all fighting for a larger share of the mineral, until there were only two left - the White Sharks and Black Octopuses. Welcome to the world of Submarine Titans.

We've only been able to get our hands on a fairly early alpha version of ST but let's face it, for an RTS game to have any impact in this day and age it has to be something special, have some new feature, some radical new design, and hopefully some new gameplay elements. What does ST have, then? Well, it does have

Submarine Titans



to produce units, you choose your submarines at the start of each mission, so you don't have to worry about accumulating resources (probably) to produce money or materials for reinforcements - once your troops are gone, they're gone, and so are you. You

will be able to upgrade your subs during the game though, as well as recruit some of the more intelligent sea life (like dolphins, which you turn into 'cyberdolphins', for example).

We're really not sure how interesting an RTS game can be without the management of resources and creation of units - it sounds like it could easily be a click-click-click-click-click-snore fest, but as we said, it's still early days and it is encouraging to see an RTS game that at least tries something a bit different. Let's hope it works.



A tried and tested concept (the RTS genre) with a few tweaks here and there. And it's underwater.

a few interesting elements which are at least vaguely innovative, for example 3D terrain and units. Also, rather than set up factories

TRANS-AM RACING

American muscle cars were once the missing link of driving games. Buddabuddabuddabudda...



American TOCA? We can but hope...



Category Racing sim
Players 1-16
Publisher GT Interactive
Available 1st Quarter 99

The release of Grand Prix Legends was heralded with much joy by many racing fans, not only because it was a great looking and realistic recreation of motor racing at the time, but also because it made plain one of the major attractions for petrolheads everywhere - tempting death by driving stupidly fast in unsafe cars. Similarly, the late 60's and 70's in America were not times for faint hearted drivers. The Trans-Am series were fast, sleek, powerful, very very cool, and very bloody dangerous. How dangerous? Well, for starters the cars were dipped in acid to strip off excess weight,

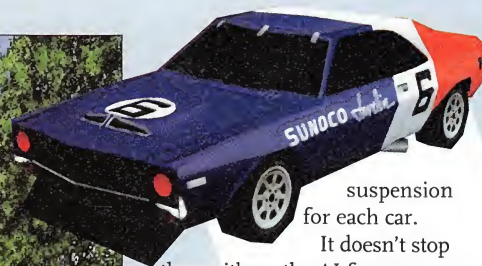


which caused the cars to fall apart upon collision with just about any other object.

The actual game is aiming for a very realistic experience, with as much detail as possible from the

time that the races were run integrated into the final version. There will be around 30 Trans-Am teams to choose from, and 13 authentically recreated tracks to race on - all pretty much de rigueur for any decent racing sim nowadays? Well, maybe, but not every driving sim can boast the talents of a company that recreates real-life accidents for evidence in court using sophisticated techniques to assess damage and collision effects, can they? Trans-Am can, the company is called EAI, and

along with creating the driving, collision and damage models (including damage done to specific engine parts, and the results) for the game, they've also included 4 wheel independent



suspension for each car.

It doesn't stop there either - the AI for your opposition drivers will be a step above the usual 'drone drivers'. They, we're told by GT, will react to your driving if you give them a shunt, and will display human characteristics, like anger, fear, and their abilities will differ according to their experience. And then there's the car setup options, enough to keep any wanna-be mechanic happy for a long time, including options such as modifying your chassis, gearbox, tires, brakes, suspension, and more. Top this all off with the feature that the different teams will be able to act differently in the pit area, and you're looking at a comprehensively realistic sim. The larger teams with big money sponsors will have a well drilled pit crew, and top quality materials available to them, while the smaller teams won't have the budget to afford the best, and their pit crew probably won't quite be up to the same standard.

Even if you're not a big fan of racing sims, this might be the one to change your mind. Think about the level of realism, the cool muscle cars tearing around unsafe tracks at death-defying speeds, the realistic damage, and you should be halfway convinced already. We're yet to see a working version of the game as yet, but if the screenshots are anything to go by then it's going to look pretty awesome as well. There's a few eagerly petrol heads here in PCPP HQ looking forward to this one - we'll let you know what the finished product is like as soon as possible.



ODT

Category Action/adventure/
RPG
Players 1-4
Publisher Psygnosis
Available 1st Quarter 99

ODT? What the hell does that stand for then? Well, you'd have to understand a bit about the story before it becomes clear. Citizens in your home city of Calli are all coming down with a mysterious disease. It's up to you to find the legendary green pearl, the only thing that can save your city, or die trying. Geddit? Or Die Trying? ODT? Well, there you go, now you know what it stands for. But what about the game?

Shown from the third-person view, ODT allows you to take control of 4 different characters in their quest to retrieve the green pearl gem thingy. You choose from a military weapons expert (specialises in weapons, obviously), a female fighter (fast and lithe), a strong man (strong, obviously), and a magic healer



It's primarily a console game, but even so it still feels like it might be quite good

(can use magic and heal himself). Whomever you choose, your character will grow in experience, gain new skills and improve upon existing ones.

Along with the RPG elements, ODT also features gameplay that seems very reminiscent of a Tomb Raider style, though set in the sci-fi future. It does look to be much faster paced though, with magic and character progression as well as puzzle solving and beastie slaying.

Graphically ODT is no slouch, the animation of the characters and your adversaries is nicely smooth, and the lighting is well up to the standard of modern day games. You will, of course, need a 3D card to get the most out of ODT, but you aren't required to have one to play - it just won't look as good. It really does look quite nice, and though the gameplay does seem more suited to the console market (ODT is also being released on PSX and N64) because of the arcadey feel, if it's what you're into then ODT is looking quite promising.

Tonic Trouble

Category 3D platformer
Players 1
Publisher Ubisoft
Available Late 1998

Listen to this cautionary tale kids, for the consequences of unrequited love can be catastrophic. Poor little Ed, a weird looking space alien, was dumped by his girlie for a muscle bound simp, and let out his frustration by throwing a can of space alien tonic out the window of his spaceship. As it happens, his ship was passing over Earth at the time and the can fell to our world, with devastating results. The contents of the can caused everything in our world to turn all weird and surreal (in a cute kiddy kind of way), along with creating a supervillain (Grogg the Hellish) hell bent on world domination and all that. So when Ed's superiors found out what had happened, he was in big trouble, and found himself stuck on Earth with the task of cleaning up his mess.

Thus begins your adventure as Ed, and the wonderfully cute and cool Tonic Trouble. Let's make no bones about it, this is essentially a Mario



64 clone, but the graphics are great and there do seem to be lots of puzzles and exploring to do, and a very cute intro too. We've only seen a fairly early beta so far, and the world was a little sparsely populated with enemies and tasks, but this is



You've gotta love that wacky, trippy, kiddsy, surreal-y 3D platform game feel

still looking like one cool game. Along with the usual 'run around, collect star things and take on

adversaries in various cute ways' there's also quite a few little extra bits, like riding a... frisbee thing... down a snow covered mountain and the like, which adds that extra element of variety and fun to games such as these. Those who haven't partak-

en in the joy of Mario 64 might be quick to dismiss games such as these as kiddie fare - which essentially they are. But they can also be great fun, no matter what age you are.



Empire of the Ants

Category Ant Empire sim
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Microids
Available Late 98

Ants - the perfect toys for your average 12 year old. Oh come on, admit it, you went out to your backyard when you were a little younger and tortured the hell out of your neighbourhood ants. You poured kero down their holes then lit it, you stomped on them, you simulated Ant Gladiators by getting two ants from neighbouring communities and putting them in an empty ice cream tub and watching them fight to the death. It's OK, everyone did it. But the ants kept coming, didn't they? It's impossible to kill them off - they're too organised and there's too many of them. Perfect fodder for a game, wouldn't you agree?

This isn't Sim Ant though, far from it. From first looks Empire Of The Ants seems to be a cross between a RTS simulation and a pure simulation of ant



life. The premise is based on the book by Bernard Webber (and no, we hadn't heard of it either) of the same name, while the object is to build up your anthill, beat off the other insects and then survive contact with

humanity (and maybe even rampantly destructive 12 year-olds).

Developers Microids are talking large about the ant AI that will feature in the game. They're saying that it's going to be some of the most advanced and intelligent AI



The world from an ant's perspective; humans have really big feet

yet seen in computer games (but we've heard that many times before), along with some fantastic 3D graphics (but again, we've heard this before too).

With the ability to control up to 400

different ant units plus the above features, this could be an interesting and somewhat different game. The world of the ants is a fascinating one, and it could well be a lot of fun to see the world from their perspective.

Elysium

Category Adventure/RPG
Players 1
Publisher Cavedog
Available Mid 99

It's not just first person shooters with a twist that Cavedog are developing (see preview on Amen), they've now got a strong and talented team capable of taking on just about any genre there is, and they're not scared to play around with the standard formulae either. Elysium is going to be an interesting challenge for Cavedog staff though, because the game is going to attempt to both be immersive and exciting whilst retaining a linear storyline that unfolds in the same way for each and every player.

Sounds a trifle worrying, doesn't it? Back to the bad old days of adventure gaming, perhaps? Well, not according to Cavedog. The main thrust behind the game comes, strangely enough, as a result of the X-Files. The team were standing around the water cooler one day chatting about the



Dogs dreaming about becoming human is how the whole thing started. Play Elysium and you'll know why

ences - though they haven't been forthcoming about how this will actually happen as yet.

What we do know so far is that the game will be based in 'reality', but that the actual gameplay will take place in the dream world of Elysium, a world shared by a variety of people through their dreaming experi-



latest episode, and soon the discussion turned to computer games. The guys reached the conclusion that the old 'stand around

the water cooler/coffee machine/etc and discuss last night's episode' ritual in many offices and schools doesn't happen for adventure games, because after a while everyone is at a different place in

the storyline. The Cavedog staff are aiming to develop Elysium into the kind of adventure game where players share their experi-

ences, including a Vietnam veteran and a scientist's dog. Sounds a bit wacky, eh? In total there will be 7 episodes, with 9 characters in the out-of-the-box experience, though Cavedog are keen to follow the model they used with TA by releasing new episodes periodically. It sounds like an interesting game, mostly because of the skewed take on what will constitute the game itself. We'll let you know how things are progressing down in Cavedog territory.

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CARMAGEDDON 2

The carnage begins again.



Category Road Rage
Players 1-8 (TCP/IP, IPX, Modem, Serial)
Publisher Hilad
Available Now-ish

Ah yes, prepare yourself kids, because the furore is about to erupt again. Carmageddon is still held in high esteem here at PCPP HQ, because it was the game that launched the face of Big Ben Mansill onto television screens Australia-wide as clueless fools everywhere jumped upon the 'ban it' bandwagon because of the violence and perceived amoral stance of the game.

Good, silly fun

As it turns out, opinion on the gameplay was divided between those who wanted or expected a realistic driving sim and those that recognised it for what it was - a fun, arcade style action fest with plenty of gibbage and fun to be had along the way. In fact, there are still plenty of people playing Carmageddon today, thanks to the varied and fun multiplayer options (and also thanks to the 3Dfx/Voodoo2 patches). Whatever your thoughts on the actual game, you're sure to have at least heard



of it - the frenzy that erupted over the release of the game was one of the best marketing campaigns we've ever seen for a computer game. Chances are that it's going to happen again,

More violence, more blood and more detail. Carmageddon fans rejoice, moral crusaders weep

too, because Carmageddon 2 is about to be released (in some form) on our shores, and it's even more blood-thirsty, more explicit, more amoral, and quite possibly more fun too.

Deer hunting

What is it that the moral crusaders will be up in arms against this time? Well, the pedestrians will be much more realistic this time around, as they will be comprised of polygons rather than



being blocky old sprites. There will be more blood, more innovative ways to kill them, and more blood curdling screams of agony too - along with a variety of animals to run over as well. Yep, you'll be able to run over dogs, wolves, little lambs, pigs, sheep, goats, cows, deer, elephants, and even penguins (along with, as Stainless say, plenty more endangered species, possibly in small cages!) And all the animals will have detachable heads and





(above) Decapitations!

limbs too, which might bring a whole new meaning to the expression 'leg of lamb'...

But it's not just more gratuitous violence and death-dealing that you're offered. The engine has been significantly tweaked over the original (which was, in its initial form, pretty average). It will support Direct3D out of the box (though there will be a software version too), the graphics have been improved with particle effects like rain, snow and fog now included, the environment will be much more interactive (which means more destructible), and there will be many more things happening at ground level, like trains, airplanes and drone cars all going about their business.

Opponent Repulsificator

Then there's the new pickups, like the 'Pedestrian Repulsificator', which when activated launches a giant spring out of your car throwing some unlucky pedestrians far, far away to a grisly death - and there's also a 'Opponent Repulsificator' for multiplay against opponent cars too. Doesn't sound that great to you? How about some mines, or maybe oil slicks - or

perhaps even a flame thrower for some barbecued peds (or roast lamb), or even the 'Big Spiked Ball Of Death On A Chain' for taking out groups of pedestrians in shopping centres and the like. There's something in there to satisfy even the most blood-thirsty player out there.

The actual modes of playing have been tweaked a little too.

With the original single player mode, you progressed through a ranking system, and the same will apply basically to C2, with a few differences. Each level will have a mission attached to it as an option, which will grow in complexity and difficulty. You won't have to complete the missions, but the bonuses for doing so will be well worthwhile. The same time limits apply as with the original, with bonuses for taking out pedestrians and other vehicles, as well as the, erm, cunning stunt bonus. Also, the same gener-

al idea for powerups has been used, with armour, engine power and destructive power slots, though there are far more 'slots' in C2 than in the original.

Kill, kill, kill, kill

The multiplayer modes of play have been retained, along with the addition of a couple of new ones. 'Driven to destruction' is just a last car alive deal, 'Car Crusher' gives a point each time you crush a car, with the winner being the first to reach 5 points, 'Carnage Accumulator' is where the challenge is to be the first to kill 50 pedestrians, 'Checkpoint Stampede' is your average Caramageddon race, 'Sudden Death' is like Check point stampede, but the last car through each checkpoint is removed,

'Terminal Tag' is a game of tag where the object is not to be tagged, while 'Fox and Hounds' is the reverse, and the 'Vampire Game' is where one car starts off as a 'vampire' and infects other cars by running into them, the aim being to be the last to be infected. There's enough variety in there to keep people happy for a long while, I suspect.

So you've got it all. A refined game engine, new play modes, new pickups, more grisly deaths, more things to run over, better looking graphics, a more interactive environment, as well as new cars to drive, some wacky and crazy cars to drive against (like a combine harvester, an ice-cream van, and an airplane with no wings), and more realistic damage to your car. It all sounds pretty damn good, eh? You can check out the demo on this month's cover CD too, just cause we're really nice people. Let the bloodletting begin!



PREY

The 'other' 3D shooter that may or may not actually get finished.

Category 1st person shooter

Players 1-TBA (TCP/IP, IPX, Modem)

Publisher 3D Realms

Available Early 1999

Details about this game's development haven't been made all that readily available, and 3D Realms staff have been less than forthcoming about the plot, characters, and adversaries, and until lately, the technology behind the game as well. The reason, we were told, was that the designers wanted the final game to be a surprise to those that purchased it, that they didn't want to release too much information too early and so face a blasé audience when the game was ready. All viable, sensible, and astute reasons, but to a gaming public and press excited at the prospect of another top-notch action shooter from a development house known for games the quality of Duke3D (and many others), it has been frustrating waiting for information - and for the game itself.

Happily enough, that waiting period is almost over. With a vaguely firm release date of 'early 1999', Prey certainly looks to have enough goodies and grunt under the bonnet to take its' rightful place next to the other much-anticipated FPS releases expected over Christmas (or thereabouts).

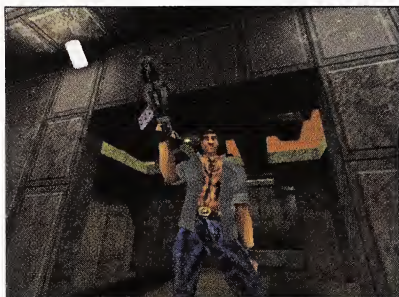
Oh no! Aliens!

Prey's main character is Talon Brave, and American Indian whose career as your average mechanic is rudely interrupted by the arrival of the founding fathers of Earth - a group of four alien races housed on a mothership two or three times as large as the entire planet. Details are sketchy on the intricacies of the plot as yet (they don't want

us to become bored with it, natch), but it seems that the aliens first created the Earth aeons ago, and now they feel it's ripe for the picking, and so have returned to claim what they feel is rightfully theirs. As you may have guessed, it all comes down to Talon Brave to save the entire world and send the aliens packing back to wherever they came from. Yes, it does sound like many other sci-fi plotlines, but 3D Realms are promising a more detailed and interesting storyline than has traditionally been the case for games of this genre.

New 3D engine

And then there's the technology aspect. Prey is being created using a proprietary engine, built from scratch, and it will, of course, have all the latest whizz-bang features, as well as a few new and interesting ideas. For example, Prey will be the first game to make use of Portal technology, which is significantly different to the more traditional model used in Quake and Unreal (et. al.). Essentially, Portal technology allows more detail to be included in areas because the only the geometrical data required for that area is loaded, rather than loading the whole she-bang at once.

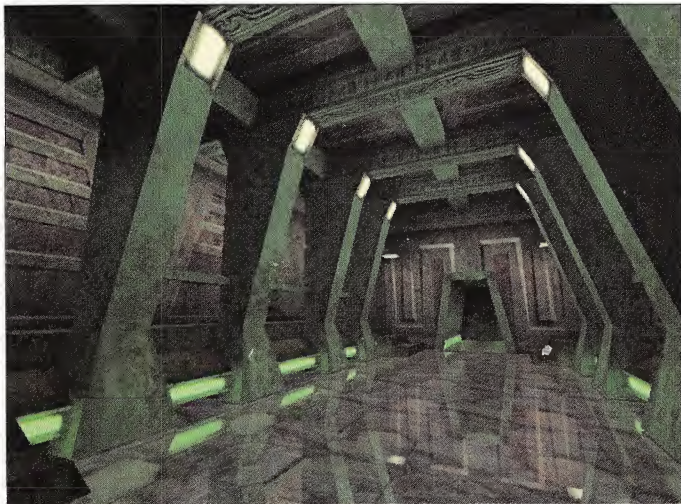


Tooling around

Also, there's the environment in which you'll be running around. More good news - you can blow everything up! Yep, the environment will be totally destructible and modify-able, to the extent that if you shoot the support beams in a room the roof will literally fall on your head (and kill you), and so on. But wait shoppers, there's still more! An extremely user-friendly OS (called PreyOS) to make

No, really, this is almost finished and it does look good too (below left) Talon Brave, possibly the first non-WASP main character, and all credit to 3D Realms for that

conversions, mods and so on a snip to do, a soundtrack from renowned (apparently) industrial band KMDFM, a free level editor (Preditor) and skin and texture editor (Skinner) included on the CD, and you've got a highly impressive and comprehensive looking game.



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TOMB RAIDER 3

They're back.

Category Action/adventure

Players 1

Publisher Eidos

Available Early 1999

Have a guess at how much revenue the Lara Croft game franchise is estimated to have produced for Eidos and Core Design. Go on - \$100 million? \$150? Not even including tie-ins such as movie deals, action figures, guest appearances in pop shows, the sales alone of Tomb Raider 1 and 2 have netted Eidos and Core around \$US240 million. That's huge money in anyone's language, and it should come as no surprise that within a month or two there will be another Tomb Raider game, with plans in place for a fourth instalment after that (as well as a movie). Eidos and Core obviously aren't stupid though, they're not going to be making substantial changes to the design of the game, they're not going to be forging ahead in new directions for computer games. In short, they're mostly taking the attitude that if it 'aint broke, don't fix it', and who can blame them, really?

A tweak here and there

This is not to say that TR3 is just going to be a rehash of the previous games with a few new levels and the odd token new

weapon or two, there will be substantial improvements along with new weapons, new levels, and an improved game engine. And feedback from the previous TR series has been taken into account also, including the balance between puzzles and action sequences. Apparently, TR2 was felt to have had too much emphasis on action, so for TR3 the developers have made an effort to make the balance between action and puzzle solving about 50-50. Efforts have also been made to make the puzzles more intuitive and challenging,



rather than just trial and error situations. But where will the over-endowed pigtailed-one be puzzling this time around?

A reason for everything

Well, in a wonderful display of ingenuity, Core Design have come up with an idea for a sto-



Lara stays fit & feisty in places as varied as Area 51 and the Vatican. Or as varied as the Tomb Raider engine can make them, anyway...

ryline that, well, that seems to owe a debt to a few other series. A few centuries ago, a British expedition to Antarctica stumbled upon a meteorite buried deep in the ice. Upon further investigation, they recovered four strange artifacts from the centre of the meteorite and decided to take them home for further study. During the voy-

age back, mysterious things began to happen, the end result being that only one sailor made it back alive. Since then, the artifacts have become scattered around the globe, and nothing much of note happens until an evil arch-villain, Dr Willard, and his scientific research company rediscover the meteorite in Antarctica sometime around the



present day. Using more complex machinery than the original discoverers, Willard's team finds out that the rocks hold material with the capacity of changing the genetic structure of living things. Of course, he becomes crazed with power, and wants to use the artifacts for his own nefarious ends, so he hires the second best Adventurer/Archaeologist ever to go find them (Indy had already retired, and his chest wasn't considered enticing enough for the sex-starved nerds around the world).

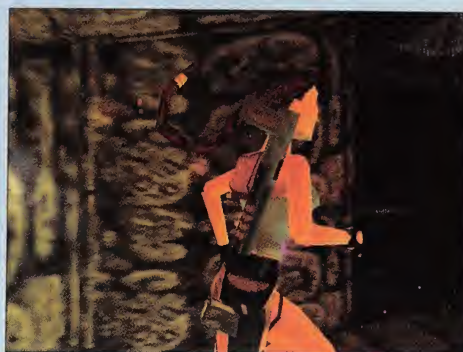
Bouncy bouncy

And so begins Lara's latest adventure, which includes journeys through 5 different areas, including the South Pacific, London, Area 51 in Nevada, Antarctica, and India. You won't have to conquer these areas in order though, this time around you'll be able to pick and choose where you go, and you'll also be able to go back to completed areas to search for extra items and paths that you missed the first time around. The designers aren't quite sure how they're going to allow players to save their games at the moment, but they do have a couple of ideas. The first is where crystals will be scattered amongst the levels which act as save points, and the second is to allow unlimited saves at any point. The advantages of the first setup are that the tension of navigating through a particularly difficult

section will be enhanced by the knowledge that you're stuffed if it all goes wrong, but the disadvantages are that you may well end up repeating tedious sections over and over again. An excellent compromise, and the method that sounds best to us, is to have crystals scattered all over the levels but allow them to be picked up by Lara, thereby giving you both the flexibility of saving wherever you want as well as only allowing a limited number of saving positions.

A new gun for Lara

Whatever method they decide to use, you'll be travelling around some much prettier terrain, caverns, and buildings, facing a



An engine that can now make use of triangles, eh? Wonder if that's going to change Lara's... dimensions

wider array of adversaries, have more moves, more vehicles to take on rides, and will be wielding a bigger and better arsenal of weapons. Depending upon which areas you're in, you'll be facing SWAT officers (Area 51), building site workers (London), vultures and Bengali Tigers (India), and Velociraptor's and T-Rex's (South Pacific), and many, many more in each area. To deal with her enemies, Lara will be equipped with tasty little items such as a Hechler and Koch MP5 machine gun, and a (non seeking) Rocket Launcher, though plans for a Bowie knife and hand to hand combat have unfortunately been scrapped because of the extra animation and detail required.

There will be a few new moves for Lara to perform as well, such as the ability to crawl (to hide from enemies as well as explore tight areas), swing like a monkey (you know, like you do on monkey bars), along with a speed burst (to get out of sticky situations quickly). Also, she'll be able to take a ride on a number of vehicles, like quad bikes (four wheeled bikes, essentially), ski-doo's, mine carts, canoes - and possibly even a Stealth Bomber.

What it really boils down to is that Core realise they need more than a re-hash of the previous games to retain the popularity of the series, but also that the Lara phenomenon is not something to be trifled with overmuch. So if you've enjoyed the previous Lara games, then you're in for a treat.

If, however, the exploits of the busty adventuress have left you a little cold there's not really going to be much to get you interested this time around - but going by past sales figures there aren't many people that think this way, anywhere.

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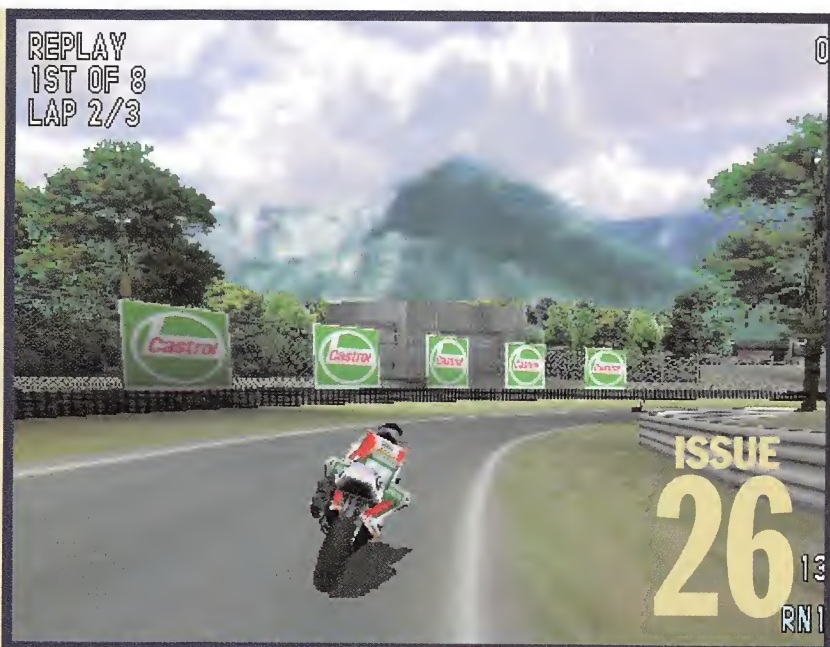
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REVIEWS

Pure PC Petrolhead Pleasure

Oh joy and ecstasy, find me anyone happier than a PC driving fan and I'll eat my... something not very nice. We've got to be careful not to get too excited now, as each of these new driving games can technically be described as the Best Ever, but then next week along comes something better.

Codemasters have kept us fed with McRae Rally betas for a while now, and with the full game out first on Playstation we knew what to expect. This is the only rally game ever made that's worthwhile. Rally games have been conspicuously absent from the PC, but now, either we'll see a rash of clones (which we won't mind, at first), or there will be McRae and only McRae for a couple of years. The GP2 of the rally scene.

Then along came Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix and finally we have a F1 sim to compliment - and possibly replace, GP2. It couldn't get any better! Life as a driving fan was rich and bountiful, the excitement was back.

The gods of motor racing saved the best until last. We knew Grand Prix Legends had some serious potential from the demo, but only with the arrival of the full game did the pure perfection of this sim become apparent. This is The One. Never has there been a racing sim that has felt more right, been more fun to play and, dammit, been as difficult. Invest the time with this masterpiece, for while the first time you drive it'll be, we'll politely say - a little messy, but



stick with it because once you get into the groove there will be precious little gaming time left for anything else.

PC Petrolheads should be happier now than ever before. Besides the 4-wheel action, we've got two new bike games this month that lift the standard way above what we're used too. Microsoft's Motocross Madness simply blows away everyone who sees it. Give the demo on the cover CD a whirl and you'll understand. Then there's EA's Moto Racer 2, which we're pleased to see is simply more of the same. The original Moto Racer was a real surprise, in that it was a hell of a lot more fun than a simple little arcade racer ought to have been. Now the sequel is here and the average decibel level at our LAN parties is at an all-time high.

And so are we. Never happier, in fact. A golden month of gaming lies before you. Get into it.

Ben Mansill
Editor

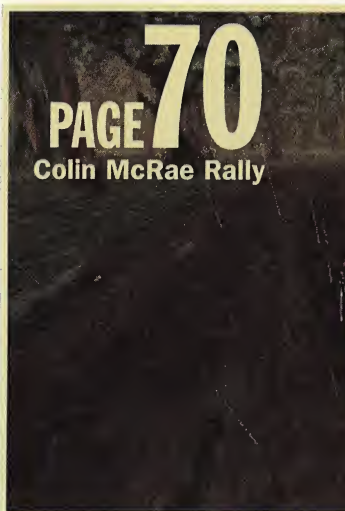


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THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

| | |
|--------|--|
| 95%+ | PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else. |
| 90-94% | GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends. |
| 80-90% | A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time. |
| 60-80% | Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings. |
| 40-60% | Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift. |
| 0-40% | Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible. |

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

The fantasy is complete. Now we can pretend we're rally drivers in the first decent sim of the genre.

Why is it, that in the history of PC gaming, there have only been a mere handful of rally games? And why is it that they have all been as fulfilling as a night in a nunnery? My 2 cent theory (currently trading as a 1.25 cent theory, as a result of the Asian economic crisis) is that PCs simply haven't had the grunt, until now, to handle both the inherently complex scenery found in a rally game, and more importantly; the physics of the car and the environment it's supposed to be interacting with.

instead, the experience is more like being behind the wheel of a car that's in its last nanoseconds prior to a catastrophic spill, but holding it there, on the edge, for the duration of the course. Graphics be damned, what's been missing all this time from rally sims on the PC is an accurate replication of the way they really drive.

The time is right.

That magic feel

Thus far, the rally sims we've had have focussed on throwing mud and dirt and rain and snow around your screen, with precious little CPU power remaining for the car physics - you know, the important bit.

Traditional driving sims have you steering casually around a smooth bit of asphalt with little or no air-time - rally, in contrast, is considerably more vigorous and physical. Perfect racing lines are not what's important in rally driving,



With 3D and CPU power to burn, all that was needed is a game-engine that delivers the feel. Among the current crop of driving sims of the sedan/touring car variety, which of course rally is most closely related to, is TOCA Touring Car Championship. At PCPP HQ, TOCA is by far and away the favourite racing sim - we regularly get together for TOCA network weekends (complete with white-board, as the in-game points scoring is so crappy). When word arrived that Codemasters were doing a rally game based on the TOCA engine we just knew it would be special.

The first of Colin McRae we saw was



"Replay" mode in driving games is reaching TV-quality & McRae's is simply mesmerising. So often great cornering is appreciated more in the replay

the Playstation version. Even with the laughably impractical digital control pad and cheap'n'-nasty PSX graphics, McRae immediately showed it was made of the right stuff. Thus began our daily email and fax attack on Codemasters for info on the PC version, and if they would be so kind, a copy of the bloody game.

Got it! Thanks Codies!

Thanks for sending me a copy of the only rally game ever made that's actually worth playing. Not only is Colin McRae Rally the best rally game by a comfortable



(below) The 3D cockpit is a monumental improvement over TOCA's



few light-years, but it's also one of the great computer games of any description ever.

It's a skill thing

It's all you; you're doing it, you're there and it's all up to you. Most driving games are relatively lazy affairs - keep the supercar between the white lines and be careful not to get too dozy while you're flat out on the straight. In *McRae*, the pace is frantic, the potential for instant death as ever present as the need to constantly flick up and down the gears and feather the throttle perfectly to stay both safe and fast. This is physical driving.

Personally, I wouldn't want to play *McRae* with anything less than a good steering wheel and manual gears selected. I use a Ferraro Advantage 1 (Australian made and truly the best in the world for the price), a colleague manages to do well with a joystick and auto gears - something I find highly offensive as an anally retentive purist, but that's just me being weird.

Paddock-thrash

Bouncing the gloriously over-powered Subaru WRX through a tight and twisty stage like New Zealand requires non-stop control and corrections for success. The



beautiful thing about it is that, being a rally game, you'll be driving from A to B through a set stage, as opposed to endless loops of a circuit. The

sheer mileage built into the game means that, for the most part, driving is not exercising pre-practised perfection through known and familiar corners, but instead simply driving the road as it rolls up in front of you.

Not including secret tracks (like, I'm going to tell you about them and spoil the fun... No way!), there are eight countries to be raced through, each with at least six stages. Given that it takes 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 minutes to complete each stage, that's approximately three to four times the mileage of a Formula 1 sim. Big value there!

Each country, obviously, features totally different environments - and even then, within each there's a ton of variety. There's no particular order of difficulty between them. The six stages within each country are usually wildly different - with the exception of Sweden, which is uniformly snow and is more pain than fun to traverse. Monaco is a favourite, it blends

traditional dirt courses with long and winding roads - one of which is almost Mt Panorama; except there's no uphill, just a long and fast fang down a mountain. New Zealand too, is particularly enjoyable, it's all muddy slush through green rainforests, encouraging the powerslider in all of us.

and has all collision detection disabled, meaning that you'll be passing through each other as you race, without the risk of bumping each other off on the tight and twisty tracks.

Driving in a championship is the serious way to play - provided you've got the time. There's a lot

Ghost-mode

Being a proper rally sim, your track time will be a solitary affair. Only if you race in multi-player 'Arcade' mode will you ever see another car on the road. That in itself is a bit of fun - your opponent's car is semi-transparent





Technical accuracy be damned. We want jumps, BIG jumps!

of road to be covered here and it's all so intensive that it can be quite exhausting after only a couple of hours. Every two stages you'll have some garage time to repair the inevitable damage and make setting changes. 'Time' is the operative word here. Anything you do in the garage takes time and it's all taken into account for the overall standings. Sometimes it's worthwhile tolerating minor damage in the final stages in order to stay competitive.

As Colin McRae Rally is based

on the TOCA engine, it's fast but doesn't look too flash. Resolution can go as high as 1024 x 768, if your 3D card supports it. TOCA was optimised for the RIVA chipset and it really shows. On a MMX 200 McRae ran considerably better through the RIVA than with a 12Mb Voodoo 2. It looked a lot nicer too. Strike one for Nvidia for a rare win over the almost all-conquering Voodoo 2.

'Virtual cockpit'

Besides the usual range of viewpoints, McRae also features the in-car

'virtual cockpit' mode, which we first saw in TOCA. Where it was an unusable gimmick them, Codemasters have tweaked this view so that in McRae it works and works well. It looks and feels like you're inside, driving. Real 3D arms and hands do the wheel work and the whole cockpit jumps and bounces in tune with the bumps and G-forces the car is experiencing. It's not quite as competitively useful as the full-screen forward view, but for realism it's hugely impressive. Whatever view you choose, beside you in the car will be Mr McRae's real-life navigator

Nicky Grist. Turn off all the on-screen driving aids and shut up and listen to Nicky. His calls are all you need to know what's coming up. "Very long easy right" "jump" "caution, ditch" etc. Reacting to Nicky's calls without even thinking about it works well and truly makes you feel like a proper rally driver.

Console heritage

All is not quite perfect. As with TOCA, Codemasters have carried over the annoying need to 'unlock' the stages by competing and winning. Out of the box, in Championship mode, you've technically only got yourself a one-track racing game. Codemasters are primarily a console gameco and this sort of things are just plain offensive to PC gamers. Oh well, you'll play them and unlock them anyway, so it's not a fatal flaw.

Aside from better graphics and the consoleque attitude to design, I seriously can't think of any way to improve Colin McRae Rally. In the past, rally games were a depressingly sad joke, now we have a sim that delivers brilliantly in every important area. Nice one Codies!

Ben Mansill



PLUS+



94%

Category Rally driving
Players 1-4
Publisher Codemasters
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For The perfect rally sim for hardcore fans, doubling as a fast and exciting racing game for newbies to the sport. Sound effects are spot on, track design is inspired. It's simply got it all.

Against The silly need to "unlock" tracks. Graphics are a bit '1st-generation 3D'.

Need P200, 16Mb RAM, Win 95, 4xCd, 40Mb Hard drive

Want PII 266, 4Mb 3D card (RIVA recommended) for hardware mode, steering wheel

3D SUPPORT

Direct3D

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MOTOCROSS MADNESS

The first decent motocross sim, the best action game from Microsoft and something you just need to see. Too good.

What really struck me while playing Motocross Madness, besides several collisions with advertising hoardings, a couple of handle-bar impalings, and one spine-shattering headplant into the dirt, was the immense generosity of its designers. Even as I return to it again and again - because, believe me, it is that good - I'm constantly in awe of just how much they've given to this game. Others, after creating the best motorbike physics yet seen and a dozen or so dazzling tracks to race on, may have been satisfied that the project was complete and would almost certainly have released the game to unanimous approval.

Pick your style

But Rainbow Studios, displaying a rare, unswerving dedication to warming the hearts of gamers worldwide, didn't stop there. Added to the standard package were a further two radically different classes of motorbike racing, a stunt competition, and, last but not least, a track editor. In doing so, Rainbow have not merely reached the nadir of computer-simulated bike racing, but also produced one of the year's best games of any description.

Real pretend dirt

Technically, Motocross Madness is deceptively sophisticated. Sure, it cannot match the



Inspired by the "Crusty Demons of Dirt" video series, MM lets you do all those insane manoeuvres and stupid stunts; and not get hurt





breakneck pace of a Moto Racer nor the sheer beauty of a Need For Speed 3, but it compensates with a number of truly inspired touches that make, I think, for a far more visually satisfying experience. First impressions serve only to confuse - I was immediately asking where's the trackside scenery? More thorough investigation reveals the Superbike track stadiums as the only discernible locations in the entire game. Every other track is situated in a variety of almost endless open areas with a selec-

tion of terrain such as grass plains, sand dunes, and rocky hills. After the initial disorientation, you'll come to appreciate this "minimalist" style and turn instead to admiring the delicious lighting effects. The fully light-sourced shadows are especially tasty, their realism making for an invaluable guide for judging both distance and landing angle. Hitting the dirt at just the right angle means the difference between staying on the track and being flipped head over heels.

It's science

Another technical achievement that adds a good deal to the gameplay is that the bikes and their riders are distinct objects. It's perhaps hard to grasp the significance of this without actually playing the game for yourself, but once you have you'll understand exactly what I mean. You will realise that it doesn't just aid the ability to perform stunts in a more realis-



And in a lovely marketing tie-in, to really appreciate the full potential of MM you'll want to be using Microsoft's Freestyle controller

tic manner, it also accentuates the handling and overall feel of the game to great effect. The dynamic camera offers you the opportunity to smoothly change views on-the-fly with a touch of a key (or joystick hat). Position the camera in front of your bike for a frightening ride, above your head for that Micro Machines flashback, or - my personal favourite - behind and a bit to the left (it just looks impossibly cool!).

But, of course, all these details can't create a great game on their own - though they can however ensure a great game of classic status, as is the case here. A racing game needs three things: a believable driving model, a competitive racing feel, and a decent race structure. Motocross Madness will have proved all three to you after one race; by which time you'll have discovered how difficult it is to brake on an extremely bumpy track, finished last on the easiest setting, and





Yes, if only Jesus & Mary Chain were on the soundtrack! Goths on motorbikes are cool! (No they're not - Ed)



unashamedly gaped at noticing that each of the four racing options allow you to compete in seasons, tournaments, and single races as well as practice on any of the dozens of tracks.

The four options are all unique, too. From the stop-start confinement of the Superbikes and the stupid excitement of Stunt riding to the fast cross-country Baja runs and wild jumps and rhythm of the Motocross itself, there's enough variety and challenge (it's a tough game) to satiate even the most hardened racing freaks. Extending replayability even further is the user-friendly track editor, although, due to technical restrictions, you can only design Superbike tracks.

Hurt people

One very useful feature is the name tag that hovers above every

bike, allowing you to determine precisely which computer rider was causing you grief throughout the race. Better still, the tags remain floating above the riders' heads as they pull off the track after the race has finished. So if, for example, on the final lap Inferno had landed his bike on your head as you were recovering from a death-defying jump and caused you to fall off again, while he somehow kept going (the bastard!), you can easily gain revenge later. Spot the culprit as he crosses the finish line and ram straight into him, sending his hapless body sprawling into the dirt (which you can then run over, if you're quick). No, it's not particularly honourable, I suppose, but - dammit! - it is immensely satisfying. Which, for me, sums up the whole game beautifully.

David Wildgoose



PLUS+



<http://www.motorcicle.com/mo/mcdirt/crusty.html>
Motorcicle.com is where you want to be if you want the complete moto experience. Here's their excellent review of the Crusty Demons of Dirt videos, upon which the game is based.

Category Racing
Players 1-Multi
Publisher Microsoft
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Motocross
Madness has got it all. Terrific racing feel, great driving model, and plenty of depth. Season, tournament and multi-player options provide all you could wish for. Stunts are fun, crashes are even more fun. Looks good and sounds good (especially the sickening, bone-crunching crashes). Rainbow Studios have just done everything right

Against Doesn't use the Jesus & Mary Chain's "The Living End" on the soundtrack

Need P133 + 4Mb 3D card - or P166 + 2Mb 3D card, 16Mb RAM, 60Mb HDD

Want P200, 180Mb HDD, Sidewinder Freestyle Pro controller.

3D SUPPORT
Direct3D

"IT'S A GOOD DAY TO DIE..."

Actual in-game screen shots



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JOHNNY HERBERT'S GRAND PRIX



Hardcore, high-speed racing freaks, this is your game.

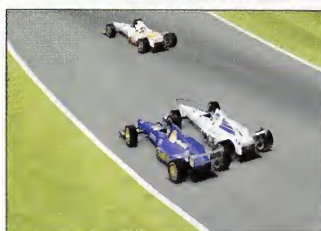
This game is not fun. You will not smile whilst playing it, nor will you be happy or relaxed while JHGP is on your screen. These are all good things, for JHGP is the Formula 1 sim we've needed ever since the great Grand Prix 2 started to look a bit crusty.

Oh joy and hallelujah, for this is truly the Year of the Driving Game (and Flight Sims too - who says you can't do a Year of Several Things...?). Every driving taste and style is catered for, including, thanks to Mr Herbert and co, Formula 1. So, now we can finally free up 25-odd megs on the hard drive by deleting GP2 forever. It's OK, do it without fear or guilt, because Johnny's is all the Grand Prix you'll need.

It's a sim; that's why it's good. This is the game for the hardcore F1 fans out there, the one's that owned, loved, and played to death Grand Prix 1 and 2. You know it's a sim because a: it looks like one; b: It's unbelievably hard; c: There's no in-game music. It feels so right to drive too, which is actually the important bit. If you were brought up on F1 'sims' from the likes of Psygnosis, Eidos or Ubisoft, you've been kidding yourself - one taste of JHGP will quickly convince you of that.

Explosive acceleration

Accelerating from a standing start will, at first, be a majestic display of burning rubber and tail-wagging. Great caution and control is needed to get off the line in style, or to put it more significantly, to start the race competitively. Once rolling, you'll wonder what all the fuss is about. Then, the revs hit about eight grand and suddenly you're very, very busy. The third or fourth time you do it, you'll take the time to notice the rapid increase in scenery-per-second flying past your cockpit. I say



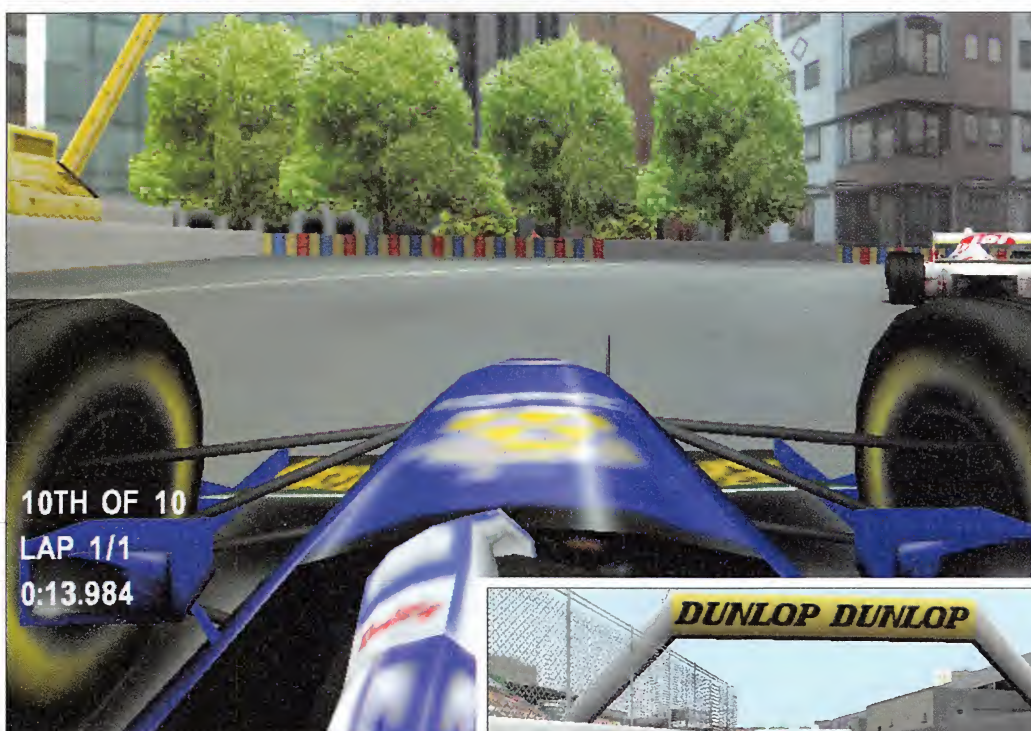
Monaco is the first place we visit with new F1 sims. All the hotels and ferris wheels seem to be in place. Good start, that.

that, because the first few times all you're suddenly concerned with is the rapidly looming first corner.

Feels real

The business of stopping or slowing down requires far greater skill and understanding, just as it should. We've all seen Jackie Stewart rattle on about the tremendous stopping-power F1 cars possess, but racing most PC

Ultra-sensitive throttle feathering is required through the twisty bits



sims you just wouldn't know about it. Johnny's car has Jackie's brakes. Touch on them at speed and it bleeds off rapidly, touch too hard and they lock and it's round like a record time. Stand on them at the end of a long straight and you'll stop way short of your intended turning-in point. It's a learning curve alright, but one that feels more

like the real thing (we suppose) than anything previously. Of course, some major seat-of-the-pants data is needed to feel what the car is doing under heavy braking, and with a PC sim, that's simply not available. This makes it tough, because braking ceases to be the instinctive, reactionary event it should be, and





instead becomes calculated, based on past experience on said track. When we all get our bio-cyber-neural interfaces that'll be sorted out, I expect.

While falling just short of GP 2's plethora of car setup options, Johnny's gives you all you'll need. This is the real fun in this sort of sim. The default car understeers like a barge and this needs to be rectified via both your driving style and the car's configuration.

Heeere's Johnny

You only get to drive Johnny's Sauber in the game, which is a bit of a fizzer as you'll miss the fun of getting the feel of different cars - always a fun thing in driving games. However, Mr Herbert's wheels are adequate enough to win any race. Here one would ordinarily worry a bit, for the designers have clearly boosted the capabilities of Johnny's car way beyond the reality we see whenever the man races on TV. Releasing a sim based on a single, hopeless, car that never wins would be a bit silly... We must trust that they didn't over-modify other aspects of the game.

The sensation of speed is fantastic. GP2 always felt a bit walking-pace, but JHGP fairly flies. Dealing with this '100%, 100% of the time' workload is one thing, but applying these skills while in the middle of a race start or daring passing manoeuvre is very demanding, as it should be. Opponent AI is better than anything so far, but you won't realise this until you've been at it a while. They seem to run their

own race at first, ignoring your line and causing you to avoid when you should be aggressively passing. In fact, the AI is hard at work, it's just very finely-tuned and subtle. Be careful out there kids.

Not quite perfect

Something this good must surely suck somewhere, and I'm afraid that Johnny's is lacking in a couple of areas that may or may not be important to you, but ultimately don't affect the playability of the sim. Like no rear-vision mirrors. Hello? Yes, you can hit a key or a button and get a rear-looking view, but it's too slow and distracting to use in the middle of a pack. Grand Prix Legends managed to include mirrors in their 3D cockpit - what the hell were these Midas people thinking! Of lesser practical concern but considerably more irritating to this elitist pig, are the sound effects. Now, sitting in the middle of a starting grid with all the drivers around you revving their engines to breaking point is as good as it gets, and Johnny's delivers here like nothing else, majorly spine-tingling stuff. But when it's just you, sans traffic, the engine sound is your regulation Super Mario Kart wizzbox. It deserves so much better...



Champagne gaming

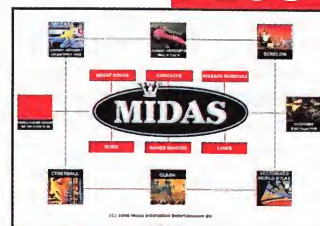
For now, this is the perfect F1 sim. The great Geoff Crammond (designer of Grand Prix 1 and 2) is working on Grand Prix 3 and I don't doubt that it'll be brilliant, but Johnny's - despite some annoying shortcomings, is the best there's ever been. It is fantastically difficult at first, but a couple of days at it and you'll be racing competitively on at least the low to mid difficulty settings. For some daft reason the sim is set with all stupid-people options on - like auto-braking, auto-gears and steering help; don't even try the sim with these on, it's sacrilegious. Instead turn it up to full realism and taste the champagne.

Ben Mansill



Easily the best modern F1 cockpit around. This is very important!

PLUS⁺



<http://www.gamesarena.com/>
Midas have much more to offer than just JHGP. Have a peek in between races, they'd appreciate the hit, we're sure.

91%

Category F1 sim
Players 1-6
Publisher Midas/Metro
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Best F1 cockpit ever, resolution up to 1024 x 768 hardware accelerated, handling dynamics the best yet, all the new and updated F1 tracks, it feels real and right.

Against Lame engine sound, no rear-vision mirrors, only one car to drive.

Need P120, 16Mb RAM, 4 x CD, Win 95

Want P200, 3Dfx or 2nd-gen 3D card, steering wheel highly recommended.

3D SUPPORT
Direct3D

MONACO

GRAND PRIX

racing simulation 2

SOMETHING SPECIAL'S LINING UP ON THE GRID

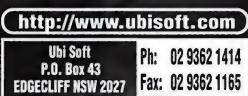


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GRAND PRIX LEGENDS

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BEST
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EVER!

BEST
3D COCKPIT
EVER!

BEST
RACING SIM
EVER!

The single greatest thing about Grand Prix Legends is so small, so seemingly insignificant, that you'll probably wonder why I'm bothering to mention it. But, please, allow me to elaborate. You see, whenever you accelerate rapidly, the cockpit graphic lunges forward a fraction and then settles back to normal - it's sort of like a spring. What Papyrus Design have achieved with this effect is an ingenious simulation of the movement of your driver's head. So what, you might ask, surely that doesn't make much of a difference? Wrong. My own experience, as well as that of others I've spoken to, is that this feature is the first thing everyone will notice when they begin playing. Quite literally, it pulls you into the game. Who needs force feedback when you've got this!



Up yours, Fangio!

The above example is indicative of the astounding level of attention to detail that permeates the entire game. Still on the cockpit, it's depicted using a slightly skewed perspective that adds wonderfully to the impression of speed and distance and gives it a nice 3D look. The dashboard is done in ye olde style, with a dial type tachometer being your only measure - no electronic messages here! You can also see your driver's hands on the steering wheel, his right hand darting across now and then to change gear. Holding down the space bar instructs your driver to raise his right arm in the air. The courteous would see this as a way of signalling for an opponent to pass or perhaps acknowledging the applauding crowd after a thrilling victory. Of course, for me, a clenched fist shaken in the direction of another car (especial-



Glancing left as he hurtled down the straight, Flouncy caught a glimpse of Sir Jack Brabham, but only for a fleeting moment

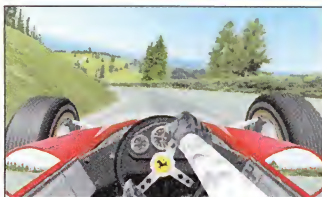
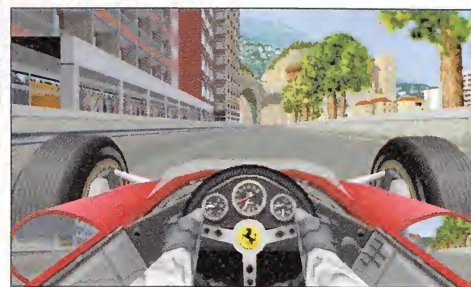
ly in multi-player) is the gentlemanly way of telling that opponent to piss right off.

Scarily realistic

Better still, the engine noise is scarily realistic. Often an area neglected by many games in favour of possibly more immediate visual effects, sound can be equally as impressive, if done well. And Grand Prix Legends does it extremely well indeed. On one occasion, I was approaching the Loews hairpin at Monaco during practice and, as I slowed right down, I

could hear the cars in front of me screaming through the hotel tunnel several corners ahead! Vvvrrroooooom!

Grand Prix Legends, as the name implies, is a celebration of the cars and drivers of Formula One's rich and exciting history. Guys like Jim Clark, Jack



Brabham, Jochen Rindt and Graham Hill, and teams such as Lotus and Ferrari are featured as the game recreates the atmosphere of F1 in 1967. All of the legendary F1 cars available are differentiated by engine capabilities and aerodynamics, have distinct cockpit views and, of course, sport their famous colours. These cars handle brilliantly, although obviously in a very different way than in other F1 games you may have played recently. And this is not just because the cars have changed so radically in thirty years, but



The cockpit, the handling, the noise, the glory!



because Papyrus have designed a better driving model. In comparison, Grand Prix 2 feels clinical and almost methodical against the twitching, jittery and constantly challenging machines on offer here.

New old tracks

Likewise the tracks, due to the many renovations over the years, are totally different to how you'll see them now. I know it's all been done to improve safety, but after playing GPL I can now see that we've also lost something along the way. Considering it a good idea to start with a track I knew, I selected to race first at Nurburgring. It was virtually unrecognisable - a nightmare of some fantastically hard corners and long twisty sections that just seem to go on forever. Monza, by contrast, is pretty much the same,

save for the absence of any chicanes, and thus is even more stupidly fast. Always the prettiest race in any game, Monaco is the track you choose to find out how good the game can look. Here, it's as gorgeous as ever, but, surprisingly, with the bay section is in its original condition, it manages to be really enjoyable to race on. The slow and narrow corners around the swimming pool are replaced by a fast, slightly kinked straight and the track is all the better for it. Jacques Villeneuve would approve, I'm sure. Having said that, it's easy to see why there were loads of serious, sometimes fatal, crashes in the past.

As far as the game structure is concerned, GPL has nearly everything covered. Eleven tracks, six difficulty levels, various driving aids and car setup screens, practice, single race and



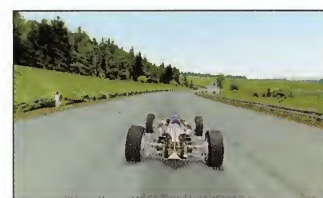
championship modes, etc. My only criticisms are with the difficulty levels (the race length, opponent ability and damage model settings aren't separated, which means you can't, for instance, choose a full length race with novice AI and no car damage) and the replay

(it's undoubtedly comprehensive, but proved a bit of a chore to use properly).

Give yourself to it

A final warning: GPL is a massively hard game and, thus, most definitely not for everyone. Unless you're prepared to devote months of your life to learning the circuits, fine-tuning your car setup and practising, practising, practising, then you won't be doing this game justice. It simply demands that kind of commitment. Sure, give it a quick spin now and again and you will be impressed - it does feel that fantastic to play - but if you're willing to sacrifice your work, your education, and your social life, to put in the necessary hours then you'll be much more than impressed. You'll be revelling in one of the finest gaming experiences in a long, long time. Game of the year.

David Wildgoose



Category Racing Sims
Players 1-Multi (Network)
Publisher Sierra
Price \$TBA
Rating G
Available TBA

For Almost insanely hard! Good thing, too, because you'll want to be playing this for at least the next several years. Peerless racing feel and without doubt the best engine noise ever heard emitted from a computer speaker. And, perversely, since it's based on the 1967 season, it will never feel out of date!

Against Difficulty levels not quite flexible enough. Replay facility is a bit fiddly.

Need P133, 16Mb RAM

Want P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D card, Steering wheel

3D SUPPORT

Direct3D, 3Dfx, Rendition



PLUS+

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MOTO RACER 2

Have a No Fear Expression Session at home on your own. Will Anti Gravity Jones look up to you?



The original Moto Racer took the gaming world by the throat last year and didn't let go for quite some time. Other companies tried to cash in on its success by churning out a few dismal efforts such as Redline Racer and Castrol Honda Superbikes, but other than the superb Motocross Madness, no one has come close to the sheer fun and accessibility of Moto Racer.

Keeping it simple

I imagine the people behind Moto Racer 2 would have been faced with a difficult problem. They had a very popular game with an overly simplified driving model and an easy arcade feel, now that they needed a sequel which direction will they go? Most developers would have taken the path towards making the game bigger, more sophisticated and more realistic, turning it into a simulation rather than a game.

Fortunately for fans of the original Moto Racer, Delphine chose not to take that path, instead they chose to stay true to the philosophy of the original, making a game that is as easy to play as it is fun. Moto Racer 2 doesn't include such innovations as artificially intelligent 3D road-



kill or a top-down real time strategy mode or even a hidden rider with breasts big enough to make Christo baulk at the thought of wrapping them. It is, in essence, more of the same.

Just for fun

Yes, to some people that will sound dull, but there is a balance for every gamer and Moto Racer hit the spot so well the first time, why bother pandering to those sim freaks out there who were expecting to feel bits of mud hit them in the head during every race. This isn't to say that the



two games are the same, however, and Moto 2 has indeed developed both graphically and in its user friendliness.

The most important new feature is probably the track designer. This wonderful program allows you to EASILY (and I stress that word EASILY) design your own off-road or street tracks

As is the rage nowadays (no matter what type of game) a track/scenario editor is included





Something new for Moto 2 - night riding

by simply clicking and dragging bits of an existing track to suit your taste. You can raise or lower the track, make bridges and underpasses, choose the background graphics and various other things. And because this program is so easy to use players will more than likely find themselves building new tracks quite regularly.

The other most obviously new feature are the graphics, or more precisely the depth and detail of the trackside terrain. You can now see through the tree line into roadside forests for example instead of just seeing a flat wall of tree textures. Unfortunately this new depth doesn't extend to the 3D engine itself.

Invisible walls

Unlike many newer racing titles, Moto Racer 2 still depicts its world in two parts: the first being the flat road surface which the bikes can traverse and the second being the background scenery which the bikes cannot traverse. What this means is that when you steer your bike off the road you hit an invisible wall and bounce back,



be unlocked when you complete certain sections of the championship. In many ways it could be said that MR2 is really just a track pack for the original game, as the differences between the two aren't huge, but if you

loved the original I'm sure you'll get almost as big a buzz from this.

George Soropos

even in mid air. It would have been nice if Delphine had ditched this now ageing concept and taken up what people like Ratbag (Powerslide) have been doing and designed a completely usable game world (ie. one where you can go anywhere).

As in the original title, MR2 comes with eight circuits (four road and four dirt) and eight bikes, with more hidden away to



PLUS+



86%

Category Racing
Players 1-8
Publisher EA
Price \$49.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Instantly accessible motorcycle racing, no long boring learning curve needed to keep you upright and on the road. Nice scenery and tracks designed for much yahooing!

Against Doesn't really add much to the original game, in many ways it's just a track pack and the tracks aren't really as imaginative as in the original title either (no Great Wall Of China for example!).

Need P133, 16Mb RAM, D3D compatible accelerator card (not sure if 3D only graphics)

Want PII 266, 2nd Gen 3D accelerator for optimum appearance and performance.



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GAMES ONLINE

BATTLESPIRE

There's fun in here if you work hard at it, but Battlespire's bugs and poor design will fight you all the way.

When Battlespire was originally released in the US late last year, it was roundly criticised, by gamers and reviewers alike, for being a buggy, almost unplayable, mess. Sensibly, Bethesda's distributors in Australia decided to delay that release here while it was patched and further improvements were made. Having just reached Version 1.5, Battlespire has finally been deemed to be in worthy condition for us to get our, by now, cautious hands on it.

A little better

Back in January, I was fortunate to get a quick look at that initial American version and, amidst the plentiful random crashes and "undocumented



Another one of those "And it could have been so good" games. Bah!

features", I could discern the dim traces of a potentially good game. Two things have changed in the meantime: one, the random crashes have ceased being plentiful (though it did seize up a few times and I still couldn't get it running in Wings) and, two, that potential has been squandered in a frankly embarrassing way.

Regulation RPG

Battlespire is part of the Elder Scrolls series, but it doesn't follow on from the previous

games. Rather, it's a self-contained adventure that abandons the sprawling (yet repetitive) non-linearity of Daggerfall, opting instead for a tighter play area and coherent story. First impressions are solid enough, with a comprehensive

character generation system kickstarting proceedings. You can choose from 6 different races, select one of the 18 professions or create your own from scratch, fine tune oodles of skills, abilities, strengths and weaknesses, and outfit your character with numerous spells, equipment and facial features. There's plenty of room for individualising your own character, especially with the custom class method, but I found certain types (fighter/archers with limited spellcasting ability) to be much more suitable than others (the burglar/thief types seemed quite hopeless). Oh, well, at least the option is there.



It's not Quake...

Into the first room of the game proper, however, and things begin to fall apart. Bethesda are still flogging their XnGine, the 3D engine used to create Terminator Future Shock

several millennia ago. It may have been cutting edge back then, but alongside Might & Magic VI (not to mention the likes of Quake 2 and Unreal) it's looking decidedly ropey. Yet Daggerfall used the same engine

and managed to be significantly more attractive. Battlespire's awful palette of dull greens, browns and greys go a long way to turning you right off before the game even starts. Another problem that probably stems from the inferior engine is the poor implementation of the mouselook control system. You have to be careful at all times - but particularly when in the heat of battle - not to turn around too quickly, because more often than not you end up with no idea which direction you're facing. It really made me feel dizzy.

Those silly elves

Further flaws, also evident within the initial few rooms, concern the deplorable enemy AI. Early on, a group of scamps threaten you in a dialogue sequence (speaking of which, the conversation system is terrible) and then motion to attack. Hilariously, if you back off immediately, they simply start fighting each other and will happily ignore you. Likewise, numerous monsters can be found standing still in the middle of corridors, content to let you do wander past unharmed. It's only when you attack them that they respond to your presence at all. I suspect this wasn't deliberate.

If you can live with such basic faults, then you might get some enjoyment from Battlespire. It's certainly better than Descent To Undermountain, but that's hardly high praise.

David Wildgoose



Dear Bethesda developers; the XnGine is dead! Get with the times people!

PLUS+



Technical enquiries and abusive emails will be received at www.bethsoft.com

54%

Category RPG/Action
Players 1-Multi
Publisher Bethesda
Price \$TBA
Rating M15
Available Now

For The plot has a similar feel to Ultima Underworld - definitely a good thing. Character generation is excellent.

Against The XnGine is splitting at the seams. The enemy AI is shockingly bad. Still crashes every now and again, needs silly memory settings and performs better in DOS than Wing95 (if it runs at all). Hack'n'slash action, like a Daggerfall dungeon, gets tedious fairly quickly.

Need P133, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD

Want P200, 32Mb RAM

3D SUPPORT
Software only, baby

M.A.X. 2

We applaud originality, M.A.X. 2 most certainly has that in abundance.

MA.X. 2 is the type of strategy game that you could play even without having to remove the CD-ROM from the shrink-wrap encrusted case. All you need is the manual (included), a brief squiz at the screenshots on the back of the box (nicely captioned), stacks of paper, a chewed up pencil and a week's supply of junk food. It could work, in theory. Of course, it wouldn't be as much fun as actually playing it on your PC, with all the associated whirrs and buzzes. But it is possible.

Tailor-made gaming

The reason for this is that Mechanised Assault and Exploration 2 is one of those rare "comprehensive" strategy games.



MAX 2 tries to please too many people by offering different ways to play. Result: no soul! Still, quite good though

eight map overlays which allows for things like a grid, unit type tags (friend or foe), status tags (and number of hit points), unit name tags and unit range tags, to name a few. Real time mode not doing it for you? Slow it down to turn based. If you want that extra challenge (or even just to speed things

up a little), play the game in simultaneous turn-based mode.

Visually, MAX 2 is on par with anything that's out there at the moment. There are at least 18 different kinds of rendered landscapes, each different enough to be appreciated. The detail present is impressive, and there is a great sense of depth and elevation. This isn't just a neat visual trick though, as MAX 2 utilises this 3D terrain to allow for more realistic strategy elements like line of sight and height advantage. Parallax scrolling is also used to help make depth more noticeable. Units above or below ground are rendered smaller than air units or those that are elevated.

It's chock full of just about anything the strategy nut could want in a title. Eighty land, sea and air units not enough for you? Upgrade them by pumping up the stats in any of the nine unit characteristics - with the love and care that only you could provide. Your paltry scout units getting nailed while up against light artillery and you're not sure why? Bring up the unit information screen and with a bit of a surge in analytical comprehension, you can find out why. The main tactical display not giving you enough vital information? Set one of the





There could have been a little more thought go into the missions other than "Build up. Blow opponent's base up. End"

Do the math

True to its comprehensive nature, MAX 2 is also the kind of title that lays out the basic game formula (albeit in a more user-friendly manner) for all to see. Here is a sample of the formula used to calculate the damage a rocket launcher does to a unit:

Base Damage = 75% x (Attack Strength - Armour)

(Units adjacent to - one square away from - Primary Target)

So here you have a simplified version of what goes on in the game. If you're familiar with such terminology, you'll notice that this formula calculates the base damage the unit can do. As is true of the wonderful world of manipulated chance, there are also bonus conditions (terrain is but one of these things) that can vary the damage a unit does. Clearly set out for every unit is a list of its performance in several categories. For the brutal tacticians (and mathematicians), an intimate knowledge of the finer capabilities of units and terrain will result in a very tight game. And for all you statistic fetishists - MAX 2 will cause frequent and spontaneous outbursts of giddiness.



Busy busy!

If it's at all relevant to the strategy genre, chances are, MAX 2 has it covered. Especially when it comes down to the crux of it - the way the game is played. Ever felt that a turn-based strategy game could have been something brilliant if it was in real-time, or vice versa? In truth both are quite different types of strategy, requiring at times, conflicting approaches. Some titles have attempted to cater for both styles of play, but most failed. Max 2 offers both, and succeeds in providing a game that supports the two. However, in real-time mode, all the depth and complexity of the turn-based mode is still present. At times things get so hectic, there's hardly enough time to make use of all the functions that give MAX2, in any game-mode, its depth. To counter this, there's game speed control and the pause button. No, not just present to relieve tension (in the many ways possible), the pause function, when activated, allows the player to issue commands all over the place without feeling the pressure of time breathing down your neck.

Gameplay wise, MAX 2 doesn't offer anything new. You build your units in factories, harvest gold and minerals, construct offensive and defensive structures, and launch your attack on the enemy (or defend against them). While

MAX 2 doesn't offer much in terms of a revolution, it does offer quality. Most aspects of this game are highly polished. The AI is a corker, and will regularly send units to attack lonely mineral outposts, so appropriate defence of such areas is a must. Enemy units will also use terrain and stealth to attack structures that are the core of your forces, so well thought out strategies are a must. This means you're not going to get too far just relying on building up a force as quickly as possible and sending it into enemy territory. This is a very good thing.

Needs a bit more

As with all things that try to appeal to a wide audience though, the overall flavour of MAX 2 has been diluted to satisfy the many different kinds of strategy gamers. MAX 2 lacks any real soul, and most of the time, any greater atmosphere. It plays a great game of strategy. The missions are challenging, the detail is riveting, and the

ful. The missions though, hardly go past the "annihilate all opposing forces" structure that has been seen and done before, over and over. Also, if you don't appreciate depth in games like these, you'll find many gameplay functions will just get in the way.

Still, considering the alternatives out there, Mechanised Assault and Exploration 2 is an above average title. For turn-based aficionados especially.

March Stepnik

81%

Category Strategy/Action
Players 1-6
Publisher Interplay
Price \$TBA
Rating M
Available Now

For Oh! Options a plenty. Will please just about every type of open-minded strategy gamer.

Against At times tedious. A strong storyline in the campaign game is sorely missed.

Need P133, Win 95, 16Mb RAM, 80MB HD

Want P200, 32 Mb RAM, quad speed CD-ROM drive

PLUS+



<http://www.interplay.com/max2>
for hints, patches and the usual host of goodies

ENEMY INFESTATION

Click - take that! Click - oh, you want some! Click - Die mother-funter! Click - Arghhhhh!!!!

It seems strange that all of a sudden there's been a large number of squad-based tactical strategy games - SWAT 2, Commandos, Army Men, Spec Ops, Soldiers At War, and more. Whatever the reason (and the primary reason, I suspect, is that they're fun) behind this surge, there's another to add to the list, and it's an Australian developed game too!

Aliens are coming!

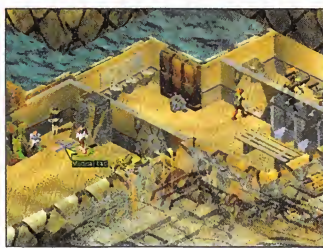
El isn't, however, a ground breaking and earth shattering game. It's simply a rather good addictive point and click affair with a few lovely touches and a few annoying shortcomings. The scenario is a pretty standard affair; in the near-ish future the world becomes exhausted of resources, and environmental waste and degradation render the land all but uninhabitable. So the people journey to new worlds, with a lucky few finding a habitable place to begin human civilisation afresh. Unfortunately, the planet is also occupied by some nasty aliens who don't take kindly to the intruders. And so the stage is set for a very Aliens (the movie) type affair - Aliens roaming the corridors of the newly founded colony hell bent on removing the human interlopers with the humans themselves trying to fight off the rapacious hordes, welding doors shut to keep them out.

Strine talkin'

Through a nicely animated interface and very pretty isometric viewpoint, you're given control of a number of humans, usually comprising of some military officers, some medical/engineering people, a few civilians and even a few robots now and then. Each unit has different capabilities, some with more efficient attacks, and all have different responses to alien contact (military people will stay and fight, nurses will run and hide, for example). Also, in a lovely touch, some of the characters' voices are done with Australian accents, which

makes for an interesting and different feel to the game.

Each of the main unit types has a different ability. For example, the medical officer is the only person who can revive an unconscious unit, an engineer is the only one who can lock and unlock doors and lifts, and the scientist is the only one who can use the research machine to improve weapons, and though anyone can carry any of the weapons, the military officers are always the best choice because they're the only ones that can handle themselves in hand to alien hand combat once the weapon charge runs out. Because you need each of these units to perform specific tasks, the gameplay mostly consists of using the military people to go on point and take out the aliens with everyone else following up behind, but this all changes once you find a medical bay.



Those dopey aliens!

Luckily enough, the aliens don't seem to know when a person is dead as opposed to being unconscious - so if one of your charges ends up as the loser in a battle with the aliens all you have to do is have another unit drag them to a Medibay, pop them in a revival



With a graphic style highly reminiscent of X-Com, strategy enthusiasts will feel right at home





You'll love the Australian accents; "Do youse want some medicine, eh?"

unit and wait until they're fully healed again, then send them straight back into the fray. Because of this, each mission usually ends up with the whole of your group barricaded in the Medibay room with the doors locked to keep out intruders. When fully healed, the best method seems to be to unlock the doors with the engineer, send out the troops with their weapons, do as much damage to the alien population as possible, and then run back when their health levels get low, stick them in the healing units, and then repeat the process all over again.

This isn't necessarily a critical flaw, as the establishment of 'beach heads' is a standard military ploy - take ground, secure the perimeter and then move on, repeating the process as you go. In real terms however, it does make actually playing the game a sometimes boring affair, and I get the feeling that something could have been done to spice this area up a little, as combat is really just pointing the mouse at an alien and clicking. To add to this, many of the secondary (i.e. non-military) units don't really do much, save for the engineer who usually has her hands full with locking and unlocking doors. The nurse, for example, is rendered fairly useless because of the Medibay. She can't fight very well at all, and even when you do put her medical

training to use all she can do is

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wake up an unconscious member so that they can walk themselves to the Medibay rather than being dragged, and when she does administer aid it really isn't that helpful because the patient is only left with one health point, so the smallest scratch from an alien renders them unconscious again.

Shoot first

There are some rather cool weapons available though, and in a nice touch many of them are new to your units, the only way to find out their effects on the aliens is by shooting at them and



seeing what happens. Another nice feature is that not all the weapons lying about the place are useful, some of them have disastrous effects like multiplying the aliens, and some of them have negligible effects on your adversaries. It's also possible to improve your weapons once you find a research computer, but you'll need your scientist to do the research here (which is about the only time she's useful).

The end result is that Enemy Infestation is an above average game, and one that looks and feels a lot like X-Com in real time. There are a few annoyances here and there, and the missions do get very tough rather quickly (and there's no difficulty setting either), but it's still the kind of game that's good enough to keep you up and playing way past beddybys time, at least for a while.

Gareth Jones

76%

Category Squad Shooter
Players 1-4
Publisher Ripcord Games
Price TBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For An interesting and well executed effort from a great Australian company that easily measures up to many overseas games from the same genre. The graphics are very nice indeed, and the Australian accents are cool too.

Against Gameplay can descend into a point and click click click, click click click affair all too easily, and some of the unit types are fairly useless. The isometric viewpoint also means that objects and people become obscured by walls on occasion.

Need P90, Win 95

Want P133

FA/18 E Carrier Strike Fighter

Standards for 3D graphics have been set, but Interactive Magic seem to be looking the other way...

Carrier Strike Fighter (CSF) is the first FA/18 E model flight sim on the market. The E (single seat) and F (dual seat) models are called "Super Hornets" and are larger, but stealthier than current models.

I liked the look and feel of CSF from the very impressive intro, to the main menu that is modelled along the lines of Jane's Longbow. Setup sports all the preferences we are used to, so, beginners and experienced pilots can fly based on their level of experience.

Two theatres are available, the Persian Gulf (not again...) and the Aegean Theatre. The Aegean where the ANZAC legend was born, so as soon as I could, I made straight for Lemnos and the Gallipoli Peninsula. I flew right up The Dardanelles into the Sea of Marmara! As a professional soldier, this made my skin prickle when I considered what happened there in 1915. Sorry, back to the game!

Mission generator

There is definitely no shortage of missions to fly in CSF. The game uses an improved version of iMagic's TALON game engine that generates dynamic campaign missions and a limitless number of single missions. There are 15 mission types ranging from Battlefield Air Interdiction, Runway and Airfield Attacks, Surface Unit Combat Air Patrol, War At Sea and Fleet Defence missions. This is well done, and in single missions you can use the Proficiency Flight Generator to alter variables such as time of day, number of wingmen, payload, num-



ber of enemies, type of enemies and air defences etc.

Once you Deploy to Sea the game really springs to life as the sounds of an aircraft carrier embrace you! You find yourself in the Control Tower of the aircraft carrier as you are buffeted by each catapult launch, and hear the tense excitement that accompanies guiding pilots back down to the hard deck. You can even click on the Greenie Board where the crew rate your own landings, and let me tell you, in CSF they are a

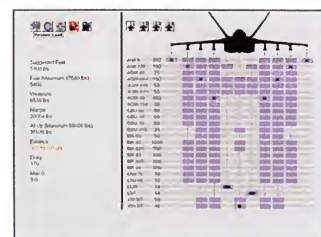
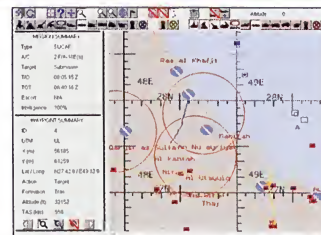


nerve-racking experience unless you turn on the Automatic Carrier Landing System!

Select the theatre you wish to fly in, then single or campaign missions, and off you go for the pre-flight briefing. A clear mis-



(right) The editor is totally complete, offering full control over all mission parameters



sion is given, target, objectives, number of aircraft in your flight, any escorts etc, then off you go to the Mission Planning Screen. This is a powerful tool that lets you selectively show all battlespace data so you can alter waypoints to better achieve the mission. A weapons loadout feature is available and you can also save missions, then re-fly them using different parameters such as a different ingress routes and height.

Flies purty

Once in the hotseat, you have

at your fingertips a fully interactive cockpit. Point and click or use keystrokes for every function. Light the fires, crash through to afterburner, then brace for launch as you are thrown clear of the deck! The

Because he's a freak (& we love him for it), Maj. Ian went off in search of ANZAC Cove (he said it was "very emotional"), then took screenshots & signposted the historical places. Good work man!

flight model felt good, and drag was well represented with heavy or large loads. One feature I did like was the standard menu approach to controlling your wingmen and communicating with the carrier and AWACS. Well done and nice to see it was carried through from iF22.

My praise of the game stops here because I truly believe that the developers are not moving with technology and giving us what we expect. The DEMON terrain engine was poor in iF22, and it's really behind the eight ball in iF18. Up high the terrain is quite good, down low (where strike fighters tend to go) it is grubby and without depth or detail. There were few objects on it, it was really quite barren. The sea is an expanse of flat nothingness with white specks as waves, there are no clouds except for a very annoying mist at times, and the explosive effects are shocking. Not quite as bad as iF22 where you got that blast of slick oily type smoke with a detonation.

PLUS+



Visit the US Navy's F/A18 Super Hornet site at <http://pmaz65.navy.mil/>. This site describes the Super Hornet acquisition program. A good site that describes how the Hornet became operational in 1983 replacing F-4s and A-7s, how Hornets are currently used, and how they will be.



Really, the boys at iMagic ought to go out and burn some fuel in a drum to see what smoke and flame looks like! Alternatively, they could watch a video of an anti-aircraft missile impacting at Mach 3; it would help next time.

Live the life

On the upside, the wide variety of modern weapons and the ability to slave the weapons to laser guidance or ground force Forward Air Controllers is well done. So too was the relaxed and realistic mode that each weapon system could be used in. This really allows you to enjoy progression through

the ranks and become proficient.

This is a good carrier based combat simulation that is let down in the graphics department. The missions are challenging and there's no chance you'll run out of missions to fly. It could have been done a bit better, and serious simmers are unlikely to enjoy it.

Maj. Ian Lindgren



(left) This sim is for "instrument fliers" who care more about gauges than grasslands

68%

Category Flight sim
Players 1-8 (LAN, modem)
Publisher Interactive Magic
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For A fun sim. The sound effects and Mission Planning Screen are real strengths of this game.

Against The terrain engine is dated and not what gamers want. D3D requires too much CPU horsepower and 3Dfx does not. Poor low level graphics and explosive effects.

Need P166, 32 MB RAM

Want P200, 32 MB RAM and 3Dfx card

3D SUPPORT

3Dfx tied to D3D. No Glide support

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW 6

A true simulation of counter-terrorist operations, and one hell of a brilliant game.

Zombie Studios were the pioneers of the Action/Strategy genre with *Spec Ops: Ranger Assault*. Unfortunately, their flagship title's success was marred by major gameplay issues and a multitude of debilitating, inexcusable bugs. Red Storm Entertainment is the next development house to make a foray into the genre with a game based on the recently released novel of the same name.

The bad guys

The game places the player in command of Rainbow; a highly classified counter-terrorist organisation composed of elite special forces personnel from around the globe. The seventeen missions within the game follow an intriguing, ingenious and sinister plot involving the planned release of a virulent pandemic virus by a terrorist organisation known as the Phoenix Group. As the plot unfolds, it becomes increasingly apparent that the terrorists are being funded by an eminent multinational corporation bent on cleansing the planet of its primary environmental threat; the human race. Close to six billion lives hang in the balance: high stakes by anyone's standards.

Command a commando

Because of the global nature of the terrorist threat, mission locations are extremely diverse. The mission objectives are refreshingly original and include the rescue of hostages at an embassy dinner party, and the assassination of a drug baron hiding out in his luxury hacienda. Other missions of note



include the covert infiltration of an office building in order to access sensitive files stored on a computer network, and the termination of hostiles conducting horrific experiments in a bio-engineering lab.



Tom Clancy fans will be pleased to discover that Ding is a part of the Rainbow team

Tools of the trade

Each mission is divided into two distinct phases: planning and execution. In the planning phase, the player is briefed by several sources and, following this, a team of up to eight characters is selected.

Individual characters specialise in one of four different areas of expertise; assault, demolitions, electronics or reconnaissance. Each member of the team is then outfitted with body armour, primary and secondary weapons, and various explosive devices including fragmentation grenades, flashbangs and door-breaching C4 charges. Primary weapons include several variants

of specialised assault rifles, sub-machine guns and assault shotguns. Optional secondary weapons like silenced semi-automatic pistols are also available. Equipment weight has a tangible effect on gameplay, making this one of the most crucial stages in the planning phase. Movement of players weighed down with heavy weapons, extra clips of ammunition, and bulky armour





is severely restricted. As a result, fatigue sets in rapidly and players are more likely to inadvertently make noise at a time when silence is essential. The ability to find a delicate balance between offensive capability, stealth and manoeuvrability is an invaluable asset that is essential to success.

The player is then presented with blueprints of structures within the mission area. Movement of teams is coordinated though the plotting of waypoints and the nomination of go-codes. From there, the player enters the execution phase which is played from either a first-person or a third-person perspective.

Frighteningly realistic

In stark contrast to every other first-person shooter on the market, Rainbow Six's gameplay is frighteningly realistic. Terrorists (known as Tangos) are extremely alert and exceptionally proficient in handling their weapons. They possess lightning-fast reflexes and very itchy trigger fingers. Many are equipped with AK-47's: fully automatic assault rifles equally



capable of punching a hole the size of a cricket ball in the door of a car as they are blowing off a man's arm at the shoulder.

Players lucky enough to survive a single shot are often completely incapacitated at worst, and severely injured at best. A shot to the head spells instant death, and an unpleasant coating of grey matter and skull chips for any team members in close proximity.

This, when coupled with a shockingly advanced AI algorithm, tips the odds even further in favour of the terrorists. A mere glance at Rainbow Six's 'constants.txt' file reveals an astonishing array of environmental, psychological and physical factors that combine to influence enemy behaviour. Tangos who see their comrades take a bullet may panic and flee like cowards. Others, fearing the worst, may start to execute hostages.

You are there

As a result, the player often has a fraction of a second to take down a terrorist before they can expect a murderous hail of return fire. This forces the player to hone their skills to a level where they can despatch multiple assailants with the precision of a surgeon. As intimidating as this may sound, the feeling of

accomplishment when a mission is completed swiftly and flawlessly, is unparalleled.

The game is no Unreal in the visual stakes. But, when taking into account the fact that the computer is constantly calculating the positions, actions and AI reactions of more than twenty three-dimensional characters simultaneously, the graphic quality is exceptional. Similarly, sound effect quality surpasses that of almost any other game on the market.

Rainbow Six combines unprecedented levels of realism with almost flawless gameplay. Since the early eighties, Tom Clancy's name has been synonymous with exciting, fast-paced and compelling reading. Now, with the release of Rainbow Six, his name will become synonymous with exciting, fast-paced and compelling gaming as well.

Brett Robinson

Get used to this - every time you turn around your wingmen will be right behind you. You'll probably shoot him a couple of times accidentally...



PLUS+



91%

Category Action Strategy
Players 1-8
Publisher Red Storm
Price \$89.95
Rating MA15+
Available Now

For The most realistic Action/Strategy game to date. Sharp visuals, terrifying AI and phenomenal gameplay

Against Steep system requirements and abominable loading times: particularly in later missions

Need P166, 32Mb RAM, 2Mb Video Card

Want P11300, 64Mb RAM, 12Mb Voodoo 2

3D SUPPORT
Direct3D, Glide

GET MEDIEVAL

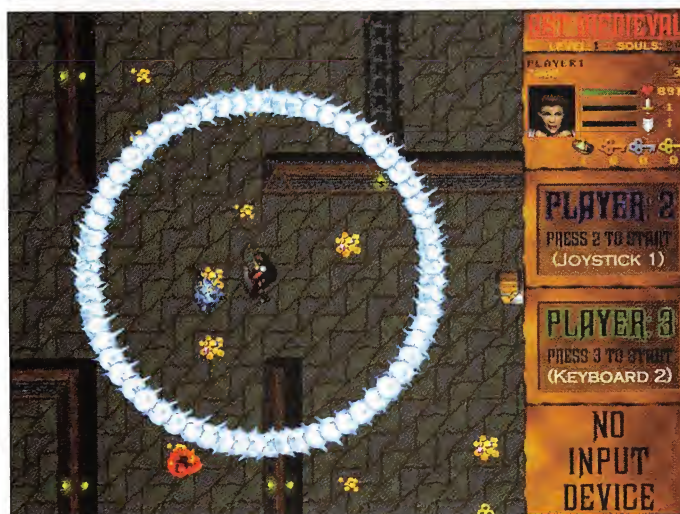
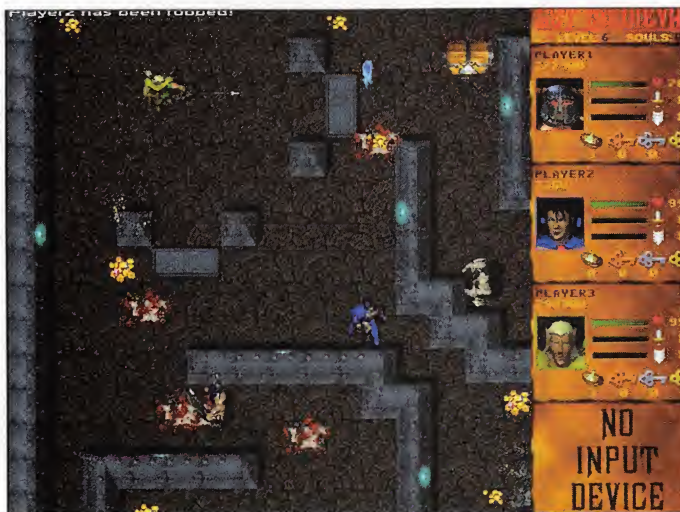
It's a remake of the classic Gauntlet, but with no new party tricks. Behold the power of nostalgia.

As is so often the case, the sky was portentous and black. Lightning punctured the blinding wind, illuminating the path Zared the Barbarian would have to take on his way back home. The first few drops of rain settled on his tired brow just as he reached the familiar welcoming signs - the old rusting gate, his horse braying with recognition, the warm glow of the fireplace. Stepping inside, Zared lowered his massive frame into his favourite chair, tucking those gnarled feet tucked snugly into his slippers. He leafed open a copy of *The Medieval Times* and browsed the personals column. It read: "Wanted. Stupid, oafish barbarian for raping, pillaging and plundering. Blood-stained battleaxe required, silly Austrian accent optional. Previous dungeon experience a definite advantage. Clean loincloths supplied." It sounded too good to be true!

Mighty warriors, etc...

Get Medieval is, well, heavily-indebted (to put it politely) to the venerable arcade classic Gauntlet. One of the original multi-player coin-ops, Gauntlet had a table-top display that permitted up to four players to sit together and partake in the action. Consisting of a wizard, warrior, elf and valkyrie, the brave party trawled through limitless levels of monster-infested dungeons doing little other than trying to survive for as long as possible. For the time, it was a great game and enjoyed numerous successful conversions to various consoles and home computers (I remember the C64 version with particular fondness - though I admit I haven't played it since I was twelve years old and am still marvelling that computer games actually existed).

In the wake of *Diablo*, and its remarkable blending of simplistic dungeon hacking and enjoyable multi-player questing,



Monolith believe that a Gauntlet clone is still enough to tear us action gamers away from extended bouts of *Unreal* and *Quake 2*. But while *Diablo* was always an evolutionary Gauntlet clone, for which Blizzard obviously asked themselves what Gauntlet would have been like if it was released in 1996, Get Medieval is a Gauntlet clone that attempts to

By far the most amusing part of the game is the intro. You'll be saying "pump it up" in a silly Austrian accent for weeks

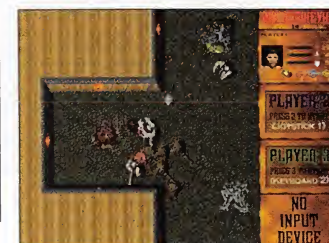
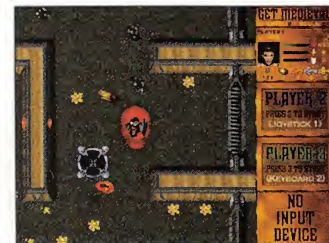
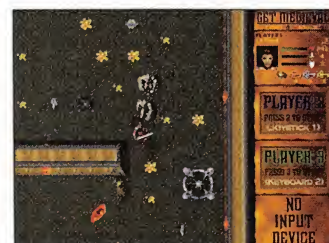
convince us the last decade of gaming never even happened. Unsurprisingly, it fails.

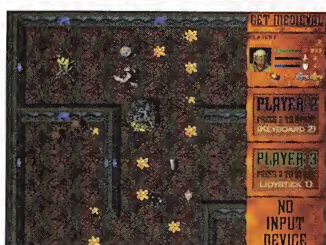
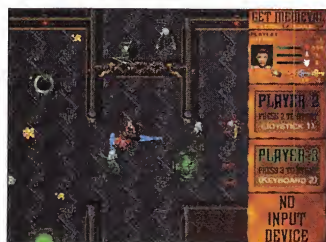
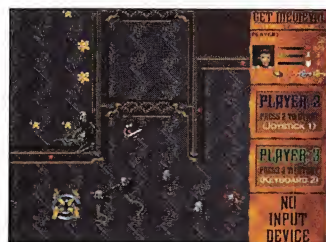
Scary creatures

So, in place of the wizard there's Levina the sorceress; the elf is Eryc the Archer; the valkyrie becomes Kellina the Avenger; and you've already met the warrior, Zared the Barbarian. The muscular foursome have teamed up to venture into the dungeons of Arrivus, forty levels of neatly-tiled rooms and corridors full of increasingly tough monsters. After every five levels, a boss monster must be vanquished before you can enter the next area and a new tile set is revealed. The

latter is a cause for much excitement, prompting thrilling speculation - will it be green or, better still, purple? No, it's... [dramatic pause while new level loads]... BLUE!

Just as in Gauntlet, all the monsters are created by generators that will keep producing new enemies until the generator itself is destroyed. Your prime objective throughout the game is to kill the initial force of creatures, then take out their generator before any more appear. As you progress, stronger monsters are gradually introduced. From the early wimpy rats and spiders to the later golems and ghosts, a new and tougher challenge will confront you every few levels to keep you wary. If only the same could be said of the various hazards and traps. Sadly, there are only a handful in the whole game and they





can all be seen within the first few levels. How difficult would it have been to think up something in addition to the three (yes, three - the fire ball, the tar puddle, and the electric plate) on offer already? Come on, Monolith, we're paying you to do this!

The gold rush

Essentially, all the weapons function in the same manner. Whether sword or bow, they all simply shoot across the screen depending on which of the eight directions your character is facing. It's only in terms of attack speed and damage that there's any real difference - i.e. Zared's axe packs the biggest whack, but he's hopelessly slow compared to Eryc's bow. Power-ups are plentiful across the expanse of dungeon floor and can upgrade both a character's weapon and armour classes. Speed boosts, invisibility, invulnerability, even a flaming protective shield, are also available via collectible goodies. Gold and other valuable artifacts count toward your points tally, with every million exchangeable for an extra life.

PLUS+



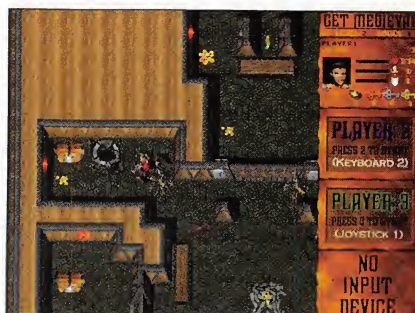
Mighty heroes

The graphics are crisp and colourful, but the old-fashioned viewpoint and its stubborn 2D nature makes for a game lacking in any visceral engagement. Some eye-catching magic effects and occasionally amusing speech can't compensate for the debilitating absence of any real charm or charisma. To be honest, when playing alone I was bored by the repetitive and overly-simple gameplay within half an hour, and only persisted any further because I'm heroically dedicated to my job. Later, I tested the Get Medieval mutli-player experience with a few friends. When the novelty of shooting each other had long worn off, we quit the game feeling underwhelmed and unfulfilled. Like a birthday can-

dle that briefly flickers and dies, Get Medieval will shine for a moment but soon be forgotten.

As is so often the case, the sky was no longer portentous and black. With dawn's first rays barely itching his eyes, Zared the Barbarian awoke to discover he had been drooling down his chin. Wiping the cold saliva away, he sighed and stared absently at the dead embers of the fireplace.

David Wildgoose



61%

Category Action
Players 1-4
Publisher Monolith
Price \$TBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For Easy, accessible action gaming that offers multi-player support without the hassles of modems or the Internet.

Against Unfortunately nostalgia just isn't what it used to be. Thin gameplay with virtually no variety or depth whatsoever. Lousy graphics and sound fx. While Diablo and Hexplore managed to drag Gauntlet into the 90s, this just dusts her down and hopes no one notices.

Need P90, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD

Want Two control pads for four player game

SPEARHEAD

Less of a hardcore military sim, more of a "Deathmatching Tanks" shooter, but still all dressed up.

Spearhead is the latest offering in the long line of quality tank sims that have been gracing the military simulations front lately. You may be wondering what in the hell would possess someone to sit in 60-odd tons of metal that moves at a top speed of 60km/h in a warzone - one word: BFG. Crank up the subwoofer and let the 120mm cannon rip and you'll begin to get some level of appreciation of how much fun it is to tool around in a war machine like the M1A2 Abrams tank.

Military accuracy

You may notice I said "fun" instead of "authentic military simulation". Spearhead is not exactly the boom-fest that is Tokyo Wars, but it is first and foremost a fun, arcade-ish game rather than a genuine simulation. There's still a lot here for the sim die-hard, though. Spearhead was developed by MAK Studios, who are the guys responsible for the US military's SIMNET tank simulation facility, so you can bet that what you see is pretty much what the US

military sees when they're busting heads in the desert.

If you've played a few other military sims you'll be familiar by now with the fact that only about 2/3 of your screen is made up of the action, with the rest devoted to a mass of instrumentation that can be quite obstructive at times. Spearhead takes a different approach to this by giving you a tank overlay icon in the top right of the screen which shows you your tank's heading and the position of the cupola in relation to the body. It's not hard-core military stuff, but it's simple and extremely effective. There are also a choice of views if you get sick of being the gunner and blowing the bejesus out of stuff - you can be a tank commander, firing a .50 calibre machine gun at those pesky infantry guys, or you can switch to your IVIS display which gives you a tactical overview of the battlefield.



(left) When going for a stealthy approach, it's best not to let the troops smoke cigars in the tank cabins



1st-gen 3D

The graphics in Spearhead are not spectacular, but they are efficient in a very US Military kind of way. Due to the fact that all the missions take place in Tunisia, your terrain consists of miles and miles of desert sand with the occasional building, but mainly it's dunes and desert grass as far as the eye can see. One thing I found slightly disappointing is the fact that the game is optimised

for first generation 3D cards like the Voodoo and PowerVR. It's not a major complaint, but Voodoo2 owners will only be able to run the game at 640x480 and will not see an improvement in frame rate compared to a Voodoo card.

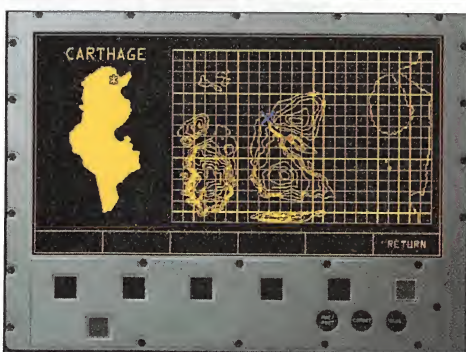
However, the game engine is smooth as a baby's proverbial no matter what the action is on the screen so as long as you have a 3D card, you won't be missing out on anything.

The game physics are extremely impressive, with all weapon trajectories performing as they should. The vehicles in the game move as they would in real life, with the tanks' movement affected by ground terrain, elevation and water. The damage model is a little too simplistic for my liking, where one hit on any vehicle or building makes it instantly explode - and this means you too. There's no damaging different parts of your tank - one hit and you're history. The sound effects are great and feature realistic weapon effects as well as plenty of radio chatter to keep you 'situation aware'.

The game options are the standard 20 single missions plus a campaign in Tunisia (which is not dynamic) as well as some training missions and multiplayer only missions. Spearhead also sports a fully-featured array of multiplayer options - LAN and internet play for up to 12 people as well as modem and serial connections for two people to go tete-a-tete.

Crushing defeat

One of the most impressive features of Spearhead is the brilliantly simple yet efficient mission editor. The mission editor lets you alter any of the missions



built into the game, or if you're feeling particularly creative you can make your own. Simply start with a blank canvas and add in friendly and enemy units wherever you want them. You can set up bases, fencing, minefields, and then position infantry, armour and air support and give

individual units attributes such as intelligence, ammo and fuel supply. So if you really feel like crushing some innocent civilians under 57 tons of steel in the name of 'training', just line them up and go for it!

Although Spearhead was an absolute hoot to play, after many hours of blowing things apart I wasn't convinced that tank warfare could be this simple. Don't get me wrong, the single missions are damn hard, as is the campaign, but essentially you're driving around looking for targets, making

sure you don't stand still and become a target yourself. When you find a target, you fire your cannon at it, and make sure to lead your fire by taking into account the target's heading and velocity - sound familiar? Yup - I also had the impression that this was all just a Quake deathmatch



but slower. Either tank warfare really is this simplistic, or Zombie have created a simulator that is more an arcade game than anything else. Don't let that stop you from buying it though, because a game that looks this good, sounds this good and plays this easily is sure to be a hit at the monthly LAN gathering.

George Argy



Suddenly, Norm realised why the pilots sniggered when he accepted their offer of a "scenic helicopter ride over the desert"

89%

Category Tank sim
Players 1-12
Publisher Interactive Magic
Price \$TBA
Rating M
Available Now

For Fun, easy, smooth, pretty - what more do you want in a game?

Against Arcadeishness may not appeal to tank sim purists.

Need P133, 16 Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 120Mb HDD

Want P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D card

3D SUPPORT

3Dfx, PowerVR, Direct3D

A photograph showing a person on a snowmobile in a snowy, wooded area. The snowmobile is in the foreground, and a person is visible in the distance, standing in the snow. The background is filled with snow-covered evergreen trees under a cloudy sky.

It all sounds like a fairly good and somewhat accurate account of the real dilemmas facing hunters around the world (how many sports require an intimate knowledge of scat?). In reality, RDH is a rushed game using a horribly dated engine, devoid of any quality. If we

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Excerpted in Full City and Sportsman's News!

• what level of dog would I need? I started hunting raccoons with a 1 year old pit bull's year's old and hunted for more than a century. One day years ago I went to a raccoons was in all different kinds of dogs he had, someone was dog food with all dogs he had. The second dog was in all different kinds of dogs, someone was dog food with all dogs he had. The second dog was in all different kinds of dogs, someone was dog food with all dogs he had.



<http://www.rockdove.com/coonhunt.html>

If you want a taste for the real thing, go here for some hints on huntin' 'coon!

16%

Want P133, 32MB RAM

Here We Go, Here We Go, Here We Go,

Features:

- Play as and against all of the famous world stars from 1958 to 1998
- Pull off greater shot placement and incredible goals with unprecedented control
- Witness an all-new approach to soccer A.I. featuring intuitive players who actually anticipate ball play
- Assemble your own team of champions from over 900 teams, 16,000 players each with set attributes governing the strengths and weaknesses, there are in total 259,584 player attributes.
- Get into the game with a highly stylized interface and fast-paced television presentation
- Hear the roar of the crowd as it reacts to the action on-field.



Italy

Brazil

Holland

Spain

England

Croatia

Denmark Japan France

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

Along with Night Trap, Mortal Kombat started the whole 'violence in games' controversy. We just think it's fun.

As a young student of the game-playing arts, I was dutifully prepared to taste every piece of the gaming pie. Arcades, Atari 2600's, C64's, NES' - you name it, I either had it, or was a few shifty transactions away from procuring it. After enjoying the odd bout or two of Mortal Kombat at the local takeaway and observing the PC version on the shelf of the game at the gaming store, I resolved to buy the game, and enjoy it to the last. Surely the PC of the time could out-perform the "competing" 16-bit consoles.

A control game

"The last" unfortunately came sooner than expected. The graphics lacked the definition and colour of the arcade, and even the 16-bit console counterparts. The sound (especially the voices) was no way near level par, and the control response kept the gameplay jerky and only just playable. Things hardly improved with two sequels, and similar things could be said about the other fighting arcade to PC cross-overs of the time. It was enough to tarnish the fledgling genre, and many (including myself) marked the arrival of another PC fighter with a glee usually only reserved for the impending dental needle at the regular check-up.

Which is a damn shame, because the fighter embodies the spirit of quick-hit, ultra-fun, "where's-the-realism? oh-thank-god-it-was-left-sulking-at-the-door" gaming. Especially the Mortal Kombat series, though its simplicity was the thing that ultimately turned people away from it.



Now in 3D!

Mortal Kombat 4 is a different matter altogether. Visually, with a 3D card, you've got a stunner that can sit proudly next to its' arcade and console cousins. As far as features go, there are seven new characters, bringing the total playable characters up to fifteen (others can be unlocked and played too, though). They've resurrected Johnny Cage for this one (although he is actually still dead, it somehow ties into the plot of MK), and also brought back many of the favourites. The new characters however do seem a bit more of the same, lacking any real individual character to set them apart (mainly in moves, but also in appearance). Coolest new character award goes to both Shinnok and Quan Chi, who mark their debut as The Most Funky And Sharply Dressed Lords Of All That Is Evil (the two bosses of the baddies).

There are three main enhancements to the game that at this point need mentioning. First of all, MK4's characters are now 3D, as opposed to the 2D of old. As a result, characters move much more realistically, and look a heck of a lot nicer (mainly in motion) than ever before. Stemming from this, there's now a side step button, which takes the game into that (cue drum roll) third dimension! The only problem is, the depth of this addition is lacking. The sidestep is just a defensive manoeuvre and doesn't allow a counter attack to take advantage of the opponent's "blind" side.

Counter a trouncing

The last new element of MK4 is that now every character has a melee weapon to summon.



Moves like this are easy! Just double tap a, single tap b, press back, back, do a half circle, hold b while pressing d 4 times in 4 second increments, and then press the 'hit' button



Rather than adding a tiny amount of extra damage to your offensive moves, these babies literally slaughter your opponents. To counter a trouncing, it's not hard for your opponent to knock the weapon out of your hand. You can also pick up skulls and rocks from the ground and use them in your attack.

The basic element of MK hasn't changed. You pull off combos (which are a little too similar to each other) and basically flail about through a match. Physics are way off, and some moves will make you laugh. Fatalities are less vulgar this time, but there is PLENTY of blood. Any excuse for it and you WILL see an excessive amount of the red goo fly everywhere. Ultimately though, it's about fun. With the new additions and a nicely polished game engine, MK4 shouldn't disappoint those that enjoy the odd biff.

March Stepnik

80%

Category Fighting
Players 1-2
Publisher Midway/GTI
Price \$TBA
Rating MA
Available Now

For Stacks of options. The bone crusher moves. Fun 3D fighting.

Against Characters' facial features look a little like those you see on bowling pins. You'll get nowhere without a 10-button joystick (the MS Sidewinder pad is still the best bet).

Need Win 95, P133, 24MB RAM, 25MB HD

Want 3D card, 32MB RAM

3D SUPPORT
Direct3D

BEYOND TIME

Let's see now. Pretty hi-res backdrops and clean, empty locations? Brain-teasing logic puzzles and a total lack of character interaction? A-ha! It's a Myst clone.

Beyond Time thoroughly defines itself within the realm of Myst, Riven, Timelapse, Shivers, Obsidian and the rest. That is to say, it's much less an adventure game than a series of puzzles accompanied by a linking storyline. Of course, I accept that this type of "game" is liked by many people and some have even sold very well, but this shouldn't mean that the genre is immune from criticism. Allow me then to present the case for the prosecution.

Myst the boat

Myst style games have always struck me as lacking in several significant ways. Each title seems to be afflicted by severe shortcomings concerning the plot. Beyond Time employs you as an investigator tracking down a number of the world's great art treasures that have suddenly gone missing in time. Such a story-telling device is typical of this sort of game, where the player is only allowed to partake in the depicted events after the fact. During play I was never able to shake off a sense of having arrived too late, as if I was just searching through left-over fragments of the real story. There may well be a decent tale being told here, but I felt excluded and left cold by this distancing effect. Consequently, it seemed like I was missing out on the most interesting and exciting parts of the action. Perhaps this explains why such games, (as is very much the case here as well)

PLUS+



<http://www2.hyperactive.com/index2.html>

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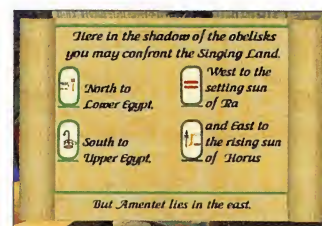


forever have you uncovering some long lost mystery or unravelling secrets hidden in time or whatever. Mysteries need to both intrigue and involve the player if they wish to succeed. Sadly, Beyond Time's failure to do the latter hinders any prospect it had of achieving the former.

Dull, dull, dull!

As a result, this is an unrelentingly lonesome experience. You wander through numerous empty locations, solving the occasional puzzle (mostly trial-and-error mechanical contraptions that frequently bear little relation to their immediate environment - the usual sort of thing) and reading clues scrawled on conveniently-placed scraps of paper. On your travels, the only other people you meet appear in overlaid and passive

FMV sequences. Upon reaching these certain points, the game halts while you watch this ghostly presence arrive, impart info that is doubtless meant to be some profound revelation (but instead seems like so much papering over the gaping cracks in the plot) then vanish as mysteriously as they came. To further destroy any immersion into the gameworld, you can then replay the sequences via a VCR-like panel should you revisit the same location at another time. On a technical note, the mouse control is unwieldy, inconsistent and thus disorientating. Navigation through the locations often requires plenty of turning around and backtracking as you try to determine exactly where you have and have not been. The fact that certain objects and areas can only be accessed when the



Yet another game suffering from the "last person on Earth" syndrome. Dull and cold.

plot deems it appropriate (even though there's no obvious reason as to why you shouldn't be able to use this or walk there) compounds the problem.

Beyond Time is adventure gaming stripped of all extraneousness, reduced to its bare (but not essential) bones. It's dry, humourless, dull and pretty monotonous. Oh, and the case for the defence? Well, Beyond Time is better than Shivers.

David Wildgoose

50%

Category Puzzle/Adventure
Players 1
Publisher Dreamcatcher Interactive
Price \$TBA
Rating G
Available Now

For Myst fans will find much here that's comfortable and familiar. The backdrops are pretty and it is a fairly sizable game.

Against Unfortunately, playing the game feels like slow death. The puzzles are tedious, the plot an irrelevancy, and the enjoyment non-existent.

Need 486/66, 8Mb RAM

Want P100, 16Mb RAM

Pandemonium 2

CATEGORY 2D platform game

PLAYERS 1

PUBLISHER GT Interactive

PRICE \$TBA

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED Win95, P133, 16
Megs RAM, 4X CD-
ROM, 3Dfx

WANT That'll do

overall

20%

It's the great wacky, generic adventures of a "curvy" chick and a "twisted" Jester dude; stuffed if I can tell the difference between them. It's all a runny-jumpy blur. A nauseatingly boring blur.

"He's twisted, she's curvy!" This engaging description of our two protagonists is indicative of the story depth on Pandemonium 2. It's pretty much all we need to know. Both our wacky heroes are entrusted with the terrifying task of capturing the magic out of an oncoming Comet, so that Nikki (the "curvy" one) can gain ultimate magical powers.

Hey, I don't think I quite fleshed out the awesome storyline enough. Well, it's the "Year of the Cheese", and the Comet of Infinite Possibilities has once again maliciously picked a collision course with our planet, Lyr. The bastard. The Evil Queen of Lyr has insane plans to fly a rocket up to meet the Comet and grab its apparently chocolate-flavoured powers and use them so save us all, then keep everyone happy (against their will). Enter Twisted and Curvy. They just won't have a bar of this and they're off to nail the lunatic witch to a tree somewhere and then get the

Comet's Peanut Brittle for themselves. Hurrah, we shout. Sid, a re-animated Boot Sole from a long-dead warrior, has found new life as the weapon head for a throwing club thing that our "twisted" court jester stereotype maniac uses to kill people. Sid narrates our plight throughout the intro movie in a stirring explanation of our weighty magical circumstance. The same intro movie pauses for long moments of the "curvy" aspects of our heroine, and includes a scene about thirty seconds long where we gradually zoom in on her angelic 3D face, smiling vacantly. I can almost hear the game's development director saying: "Hey, it worked for Tomb Raider, let's chuck in a leggy chick! With big tits! We'll make millions!"

Hey, it makes sense to me. Expecting a 3D platform challenge? I reckon you'll get about



forty minutes play out of this. Max. Unless you're under the age of twelve, that is. In which case you're preventing someone else from playing Quake or TA. Get off the PC, now, until you can afford your own! You ungrateful punks.

In the game, the experience is... it's like running along a train track, with the occasional vertical track to climb, then more train track running, an occasional need to jump over something, then kill something, climb up something. We've used two keys so far folks. Pretty simple stuff.

Hendry Saunders

Judge Dredd Pinball

CATEGORY Pinball sim

PLAYERS 1-4 (single PC)

PUBLISHER Gremlin

PRICE \$TBA

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED P90, 16Mb RAM,
Win 95

WANT P166, 32Mb RAM

overall

82%

For the connoisseur of arcade pinball action.

It's that old argument of quality over quantity. On the one hand, Gremlin's Judge Dredd Pinball plays (and for a variety of reasons) a damn fine game of pinball. On the other hand, JD Pinball has got only ONE lousy machine to play on. No matter which way you look at it, for gamers wanting some replay value and a bit of variety - it's not a good sign.

Pin-Ball Games (the developer of JDP) aimed to recreate the pinball experience as closely as possible on the PC. Nothing new here at all: most developers of pinball games go for the same thing. The problem in the history of said sim is that technology hadn't really been able to match the demands thrown at it. You got nice visuals (never great) or realistic physics, but hardly ever both. Developers mutated the sim into many, degenerate forms (with tacked on adventure bits and cut-scenes for example). Pinball enthusiasts have been plagued ever since technology finally caught up with the pinball sim. Pin-Ball Games however, know their game. Not relying just on technology to allow a sim

that "feels" like the real thing or look a treat, JDP gives the impression that PBG built the game as if they were building the real thing.

The design of the table top itself is fantastic. Loops abound, with the traditional mushroom bouncers located at the top end of the table (obscured however by other table features). There's a skill shot at launch, as well as skill-based ramp loops hidden throughout the table. The Dotmation display (which is positioned just above the table display - proportionately in letter box format) provides the expected digital depth to game, with stacks of cool little animations fleshing out the table top experience. Visually realistic and satisfying, the top down view is at a decent angle, without resorting to a scrolling screen (big gameplay mistake).

On top of the standard flipper, launch mechanism and tilt controls, JDP incorporates a left and



Sure, it's a great pinball game, but can someone PLEASE make a good Judge Dredd game that's NOT pinball!!!!?

right "polite slap" to the "machine". PBG know their stuff.

The only noticeable absence is the ability to pull back the launcher while the ball is returning down the launch ramp (you have to wait till it stops against it before you can launch again).

Otherwise, JDP is a fantastic pinball sim. It's classy, realistic, flashy, and fun. It's major let down however, is that only one table is on offer to play on. While it'll take time to master the table (like the real thing), it may not be the best value for those with short attention spans.

March Stepnik

Quake 2 Mission pack - Ground Zero

If you're one of the many souls who've pounded down the corridors and breezeways of Quake 2's deathmatch levels too many times to remember or if you've been bored silly by the single player game for the last time then what you need is a change! Activision and Rogue have finally released their long awaited second Q2 mission pack: Ground Zero and it should help make a few Quakers happy.

As an expansion to Q2's single player game, Ground Zero offers a much more challenging, interesting and fun experience than the original. The new solo game levels are intricately designed and the need to travel in and out of various levels to finish your tasks is almost reminiscent of Hexen with its hubs.

Ground Zero also has several new enemies to challenge the single player, the most commonly encountered and annoying are the turrets. These come in three forms, spewing either blaster fire, machine gun bullets or rockets at you, and take two direct hits from a rocket to destroy. The Medic

Commanders are a formidable foe as they can not only teleport new Stroggs into battle but resurrect the dead as well. Stalkers are giant spiders with extreme agility and a penchant for jumping out of hidden places to scare the bejeezus out of you. The most impressive of the new critters though is the Carrier. It looks like a Macross fighter and is armed with twin chainguns, a rail gun and grenade launcher. It also teleports in Flyers by the dozen!

From a multiplayer perspective Ground Zero has a few interesting trinkets to spice up the usual Q2 experience. There are a few cool pick-ups like the Hunter Sphere which tracks and kills the player who just fragged you! Defender Spheres attack anyone attacking you (as well as reducing your wounds by half) Doppelgangers create a decoy image of your grunt and Tesla Mines can turn entire rooms into death traps, great!



A Quake game in the small-review section? Unheard of! A Quake game that is a challenging single-player experience? Unheard of!

There are also ten new multi-player maps with Ground Zero and they are mostly very good with a balanced variety of sizes and complexity to cater for different numbers of players. I haven't mentioned the weapons yet because they are probably the most disappointing part of the package. There is a gun that imitates Unreal's Stinger (why bother?), a nostalgic but useless chain saw, the pointless Plasma Beam and the Proximity Mine Launcher (the only useful one of the lot).

George Soropos

CATEGORY 1st person shooter

PLAYERS 1 - Multi

PUBLISHER Activision

PRICE \$49.95

RATING MA 15+

AVAILABLE Now

NEED P166, 32Mb RAM, 4X CD (w/o 3D accelerator) P133, 16Mb RAM (with 3D accelerator)

WANT PII 300, 64Mb RAM, Voodoo2

overall

87%

It's more Quake, how could that be anything but joyful?

3D Ultra Mini Golf Deluxe

3D Ultra is the most overdone example of putt-putt madness I have ever seen. The extreme inspiration that spawned these insane ideas is obviously induced by hard drugs of the most toxic variety. The utterly strange concepts include golfing through a construction yard, along a busy highway, through a pod of fluffy clouds and among ice floes filled with Antarctic wildlife hazards.

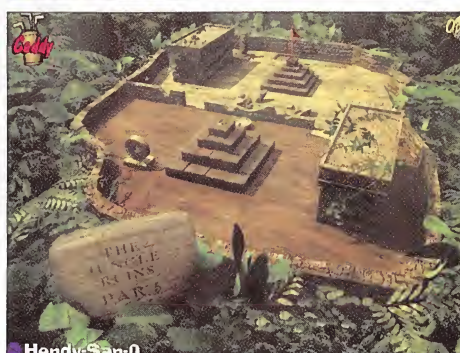
Each hole is a full 3D environment, which is re-rendered every time you take a shot. It's of the highest visual quality, with rich textures and complex models. This combined with the super-cheesy MIDI elevator music, which is intended in a playful-retro kind of way (we hope) completes the overdone Disneyland appearance. It's often funny in a situational context.

Every hole on the course has its own voice-over, randomly improvised from a stack of ethnic stereotypes with no apparent relevance. This wacky voice gives you a briefing before the hole begins, showing some of the prospective routes and dangers of the course. This is all fine, and although

occasionally funny in an unintentionally twisted and sardonic way, some of the samples loop every time you take a putt, which you can probably imagine gets tiresome very quickly.

The detail of the environments is really incredible though, often looking not realistic, but high-quality-cartoon level throughout. The way they are true 3D is also cool. It looks very nice at all times. Which is actually a bit scary. In the Elizabethan Castle, the rendered cannons are of a higher quality than I have seen in some actual war simulation games! And wasted on Golf, for Pete's sake. The artists that worked on this were either highly bored or highly paid.

Hendry Saunders



CATEGORY Fantasy Mini-golf

PLAYERS 1-4 (LAN, Modem)

PUBLISHER Sierra

PRICE \$TBA

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED Win95, Pentium, 16 Mb RAM, 15 Mb disk space, 2xCD-ROM, SVGA hardware

WANT Nothing Special, 32 Mb RAM

overall

60%

It's a bloody weird, well-presented "Extreme Sports" take of the whole MiniGolf spectacle.

STAR WARS: Behind the Magic

A 2 CD set about pale, overweight, bearded ILM geeks who sit in front of Silicon Graphics Workstations all day? Not quite...

Developer: LucasArts
Genre: Encyclopedia
Price: \$49.95

Ever wanted to see Chewbacca with his mask off? Hear Kenny Baker complain about how Goddamn awful it was being an Ewok? See scenes cut from Star Wars which never even made it into the Special Edition? Well, that's only the tip of the iceberg... and I mean, the really tiny, sharp, cold bit that's hard to see with the human eye! Behind The Magic is what "Multimedia CD-ROMs" always purported to be, but never were. Not only is this the ultimate Star Wars product ever, it's possibly one of the best presented and most beautifully produced CD-ROM Encyclopedias ever. Comprehensive just isn't the word.

Each film in the classic trilogy has been pulled apart by the people behind the productions, or "behind the magic" so-to-speak, and all the bits have been laid out in front of us - from an exhaustive look at all the characters, technology and locations, to all the processes that go together to make magical films such as these. Nothing has been spared. Even seemingly minor background aliens in Jabba's palace are examined - down to their height, homeworld and unsightly personal habits to on-set pics and design sketches and shots of the production crew painting bumps on their latex craniums. Fans of the Star Wars movies are simply going to go nuts over this 2 CD collection. In the Technology section, for instance, go on a 3D walk-through of the Falcon with C3-PO as your guide, or test out a variety of weapons on a lone Stormtrooper - from an Ewok rock to the Death Star Beam! Behind The Magic isn't afraid of being technical either, with full charts displaying vehicle speeds



The ultimate Star Wars resource, period. Bigger than that galaxy, far, far away and almost as enjoyable as the movies themselves

and size comparisons, as well as weapon payloads and manufacturing costs and a Galactic Map explaining Hyperspace distances. There are even 300 trivia questions to test your Jedi abilities.

Any Star Wars fan or even movie buff will be captivated for hours with the seemingly endless shots of spaceship models under construction and excellent AVI files of interviews with everyone from George Lucas to the genius sound designer Ben Burtt and even Doug Chaing, Art Director behind the upcoming prequel, Star Wars: Episode One. In fact, talking of Episode One, there's a whole section devoted to the much-anticipated film which hits theatres in May 1999, which previews a Battle Droid, Naboo Royal N-1 Starfighter, and a collection of pics of the film in production.

Disc Two contains some of the best material in the package, being the Scene By Scene sec-



tion. Incredibly, here are all three scripts with a line by line account of every moment, complete with thousands of pics and "callouts" which, with a simple mouse click, explain important machinery, characters and apparently meaningless props in great detail for every scene in all three films! There are even highlights of that day's filming, or interesting notes about how what was

filmed diverted from the original script or what was even improvised on the set by certain actors. Three months later, when you've managed to get through all of that, you can then watch the legendary Biggs scenes cut from the original

Star Wars, and even a discarded Cantina sequence complete with shonky acting, all reproduced here for the first time in full!

You're looking at a Star Wars product which is the best LucasArts have ever devised. A must have for any self-respecting Star Wars addict, and casual fans alike. There, and not even one crappy Force Feedback joke!

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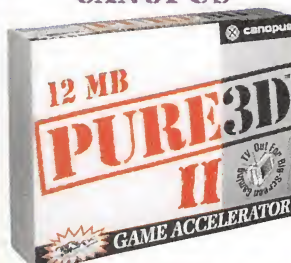
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CANOPUS



PURE 3D FX

HEADRUSH

You Don't Know Jack, Jr.

Developer: Berkeley Sysystems
Players: 1-3
Rating: G8+
Need: 486/66, 16Mb Ram, 2xCD
Want: P90

Aaarrgh! It's all a lie! Those bastards tricked me, and they're trying to trick you too. Head Rush isn't a game, it's a learning experience! They've hidden it very cleverly behind an amusing interface, cool and zippy host, and some wacky sounding subject titles, but it's all a lie! Dammit, it's still quite fun though.

You see, what Berkeley Systems have done is take the 'You Don't Know Jack' experience and style and made a derivative title for the early teen market. You play the game in exactly the same way as YDKJ, with up to three people at the same keyboard battling to answer weird and wacky questions quicker than anyone else. In a very crafty

move though, Berkeley Systems have designed the questions so that they appear to be wild and wacky - but it's actually the kind of game that parents and teachers will be pleased for you to play (a definite warning sign). You see, at least most of the questions have two parts to them, for example; "Because it's not a part of the human brain, which title should NOT be used for a show starring Pinky and the Brain?". The first part is referring to the cartoon Pinky and the Brain, but the second requires knowledge of parts of the brain itself. Anatomy...science class...yep, that nerd who sits up the front of Science class is likely to answer this one the quickest. And they're all like that! One part early teen pop-culture, one part high school knowledge tests (and at times it's disappointingly Amero-centric).

Despite the learning aspect,

\$30,000

If the new strip is called "John Calvin and Hobbes," who will Hobbes' new playmate be?

- 1 a famous American playwright
- 2 the first Prime Minister of England
- 3 a Hall of Fame shortstop
- 4 a leader of the Protestant Reformation

Sir Knob \$20,000 **Miss Stupid** \$10,000 **Johnny Blow** \$10,000

\$10,000

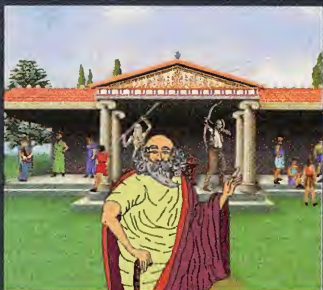
Because it's NOT a part of the human brain, which title should NOT be used for a show starring Pinky™ and part of the Brain™?

- 1 "Pinky & the Nebula"
- 2 "Pinky & the Cerebellum"
- 3 "Pinky & the Cerebrum"
- 4 "Pinky & the Medulla"

Sir Knob \$0 **Miss Stupid** \$0 **Johnny Blow** \$10,000

It's all a plot to teach the kiddies!

Head Rush is still quite cool fun to play, whatever age you are (though 10-16 year olds will probably get the most out of it). And best of all, if your parents give you grief while you're playing the game you can tell them that you're using an educational tool.



Developer: Sound Source Interactive
Players: 1
Rating: G
Need: p90, Win95, 16Mb RAM
Want: Studded leather skirt

It's true! Learning can be fun! Especially if there is enough incentive to work through a collection of demanding and taxing educational questions. In this case, if you manage to consistently give correct answers, you get a short video from either the Hercules or Xena Warrior Princess television shows. The incentive in this case, is to see a clip from the series that shows more body and less plot. Joy!

Which may seem a little out of place as Quest for the Scrolls - Hercules & Xena Learning Adventure is an educational title aimed squarely at children from

XENA & HERCULES

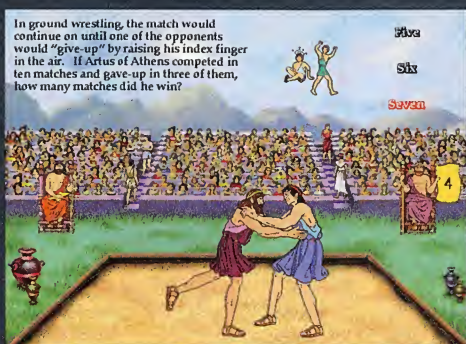
QUEST FOR THE SCROLLS LEARNING ADVENTURE

It's Xena - only just, and nowhere near enough.

seven to eleven years of age. To excuse all readers interested in a never before seen Hercules/Xena title, with plenty of innuendo and cleavage shots, sorry. The name association is minimal at best. Other than an brief introduction using existing Hercules and Xena footage, and the odd clip scattered through out the title, Quest for the Scrolls is packed to the brim with wholesome, educational, near

Hercules/Xena-less goodness.

Which doesn't automatically make this a title to avoid. If you have kids that need a bit of a brain massage, you could do worse than plonking them in front of this. Quest for the Scrolls is a good collection of mathematical, language, and logical puzzles presented all with the flavours of Ancient Greece. The interest here, is that perhaps your kids can learn some ancient



history while tackling a fairly standard early school syllabus.

There are some down right easy questions, and some puzzles that may even challenge the parent that's sitting through the adventure with their kid



Too much wholesome education, not nearly enough camp, cleavage or lesbian overtones

(to get a squiz at the next er, beautifully shot Xena or Hercules video clip). Quest for the Scroll's strength is that it offers a wide variety of tasks to educate the young uns, but suffers from a lack of depth in each task. As far as edutainment titles go - a decent effort, with a very casual approach.

March Stepnik

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COMMANDOS

THE PLAYGUIDE

Not only is Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines a fantastic game, it's also a pretty bloody hard one too. Each mission requires some serious planning and, at times, intricate timing to pull the whole thing off. If you lose one man, you're toast. Each Commando has his own attributes and abilities that are integral to the mission, and you need to choose well which path of action to take, whether that be sneaking around as stealthily as possible, or setting traps and luring the Nazis to their peril.

It's a bit hard!

Despite the attractions of a game such as this at times it can

all become a bit too much, and after you've replayed the same section 13 times trying every different strategy you can think of - and still fail...well, there's only one thing left to do. Get some help! Luckily, you've come to the right place.

The right way's the wrong way

Keep in mind, though, that one of the best facets of Commandos is that there's usually more than one way to succeed in your objectives. This Playguide only outlines one way to survive and complete the missions, and though the methods we list here will work, there are also other ways to achieve your goals. To add to this, if something does go wrong in your mis-

sion and the guards discover you before you're ready, it's a good idea to find a corner to hide behind and try to shoot your way out as the guards come to investigate. It goes without saying that you need to save your games regularly, especially before attempting any difficult manoeuvres.

General Survival tips:

- Use hotkeys more so than clicking on icons. It's much faster and easier that way.
- Always zoom the map out to the farthest possible when starting missions to see an overview of the map, so as to plot out at least a general path of attack.
- Before you start shooting or killing, make sure that you won't

be seen by other guards. Shift-clicking on an area will give you a red target - if any guards look at this area then you will be notified.

- You DO NOT need to take out every Nazi troop. Most times, it's easiest if you only kill those you have to. Less hassle, less danger.

- Only click twice to make your troops run. Constantly clicking madly means that they'll walk/run/walk/run and so on. Not a good thing.

- Sometimes it makes things easiest if you shoot the ground to get the Nazi's attention. They'll come running towards the sound, at which point you can blow the crap out of them.

COMMANDOS

THE MISSIONS

Level 1: Baptism of Fire

First things first, select the Driver and your Frogman and get them to hit the deck (press 'C'), otherwise the patrolling Nazis will see them. Next, select the Green Beret and head around to the left behind the broken walls - being careful to avoid the attention of the patrolling guard in that area. Crawl as close as you can get to the guard without him detecting you, and then when he walks south past you, jump up and shoot him in the back, or run up behind him and knife him.

When the two patrolling guards on the opposite side of the wall are walking south, move the Green Beret to the wall next to the sentry guard. Wait until the patrol has turned its back once again, then scale the wall and move down the other side. Crouch behind the sentry post until the guards have once again turned their back, and then use the knife to take out the sentry silently. Quickly drag his body behind the house, and dump it there. Then select the driver, and when the guards are facing away from him, stand him up and run towards the patrol. Use the Submachine gun (hotkey: 'M') to take care of them.

Now it's time to bring the Frogman into play. Move him into the water and equip the Frogman with the SCUBA gear (hotkey: 'D') and then swim to the northernmost guard on the island you started from. When his back is turned, and the other patrolling guard is looking away, jump up and shoot him with your harpoon (hotkey: 'J'), then use the same method for the other two. Next grab the inflatable raft and head down to your companions and load them up.

Row to the northern island and hide behind the southernmost building. Use one of your men to run up behind the machine gunner to kill him then run back to the others, leaving the body where it lies. When the patrol sees the body, they will



MISSION 1

come down to investigate. Make sure all three of your men are selected, and all are holding their pistol (hotkey: 'G'), then shoot the guards as they come around the corner.

The two remaining guards situated to the north can be easily taken out by moving behind the stationary guard, shooting him, and then waiting for the other guard to come and investigate. When he is in range, shoot him and the area is yours. All that remains is to take out the Radar, by using your Green Beret to carry an oil barrel next to it, then moving away a safe distance and shooting the barrel. You're done!

Mission 2: A Quiet Blow Up

Be careful of the patrol-boat on the river. Watch its sweeps a few times so that you're familiar with the timing. Take out the patrols near you when the boat isn't around, and then move the corpses behind one of the walls. Then move your Sniper to a position to take out the guard on the wall, as well as the guard down at the lower right of the map when the large patrol is backing away from you. When that's done, use the Frogman to deploy the boat and take the



MISSION 2



MISSION 2



MISSION 1



MISSION 2

the Demo man to drop the explosives next to the fuel deposits, and then run both to the truck and jump in. If you time it right, the alarm won't be sounded until you're on your way out of the compound in your truck and on the way to safety.

Mission 3: Reverse Engineering

Lots of killing here, but it's not so hard if you take out most of the Nazis with stealth. The first three guards near your start position can be taken out with man traps, or just by selecting all your troops and ambushing them when their back is turned. Two more guards will come running at the sound of gunfire though, but just sit back and wait for them to enter your line of fire - simple. The Spy's uniform is located at the rear of the lower camp. First move all your men down to the water (and knife the stationary guard near the edge), and use the Frogman to swim to the far end of the camp. Use him to pop up and take out as many sentries as he can posted along the edge of the water when the coast is clear (either with the knife or the harpoon gun). You should also try to use the Frogman to knife the two remaining guards near the uniform from behind. Then bring the Spy over and pick up the uniform. Move the Spy across the bridge (ignoring the machine gunner and patrols) and into the camp, then turn off the electrified fence.

COMMANDOS



MISSION 3

Use the Frogman once again to swim to the other side at the far end, and employ the same pop up method to take out the guards along the edge, after Diverting the far guard's (inside the compound) attention with the Spy. Then bring the Sapper (Demo man) across the water and use him to cut through the fence, and then while the Spy is talking to the last guard, take him out from behind with the Frogman and his knife. Hide the troops out of the way, and then use the Spy to administer lethal injections to the troops guarding the explosives without raising the alarm - this is very hard, so make sure you save. Use the Sapper to pick up the explosives, and then crawl along the water's edge until he's next to the pillbox (without being spotted). Drop the charge, then crawl away fast. The 5 man patrol will take notice of the explosion, but will eventually go back to their patrol, and when they do, get the Sapper and the Frogman in the boat and row to the edge of the dam. Use the Sapper to drop the second charge, then row for your life! Head back to the side you started on, regroup all your men (the Spy can walk back normally) and head for your pickup truck. Done!

Mission 4: Restore Pride

There's a multitude of ways to take out the initial guards. Once you've studied their movements and sight regions, it shouldn't be too hard. If you do get seen, just fall back a little and wait for them to come to you - then kill 'em!

Once you've cleared out a path to the tank up north, use the Driver to drive it around and



MISSION 3

squish any remaining troops. Then, it's time to let the carnage commence. Drive to the gap in the rocks just near the patrol boat, and with a little manoeuvring you can take out most of the troops in the base. Keep shooting, and eventually the patrols out of range will come over for a look. You should be able to pile up the bodies quite nicely here, especially once the alarm has sounded.

Then move the tank to the barbed wire and take out the troops on the other side (you can't blow up the train, unfortunately). Jump out, and group the rest of your units and cross the bridge, taking out the remaining troops as you go. Don't worry too much about stealth, as you should already have exhausted the reinforcements with the tank. Head to the top of the map to pick up the supplies, and then back to the bridge. Use the Frogman to climb down the ladder and deploy the raft. Send the Sapper along too, and then head for the patrol boat, exiting the boat there. Then just move the Sapper up to the house and detonate the explosives. While this is happening, send the Frogman



MISSION 5



MISSION 4

reinforcements.

Now, move the Green Beret to the south of the map, carefully avoiding troops wherever possible. Don't forget that he can hide



MISSION 4



MISSION 4

back and pick up the rest of your troops, get everyone to meet at the patrol boat and sail away. Good job!

Mission 5: Blind Justice

This is a little tougher than the previous mission, and it's easiest to leave as many Nazis alive as you can. Firstly, kill off the single guards to your north and then use the Spy to grab the uniform. Get the Spy to the top level using the cable car, and then kill the single guard at the south of the cliff. Stand back from the body a little, just north of the barrels. Eventually the body will be discovered, and a patrol will run to the body. When they are milling about, shoot the barrel nearest the barracks. This should kill all the troops, as well as exploding the barracks - thereby eliminating the threat of

Mission 6: Menace of the Leopold

To begin with, move your men around to the south and east, taking out the guards as you go. You have to save at least one round from your Sniper to take out the guard up on the platform near the Leopold tank at the end. You will need to make sure that the rescue truck that comes out is not destroyed by Guards once you jump in it - take the guards out first. Other than that, just use stealth where you can, and take out most guards by luring them into traps using their dead comrades as bait.

Mission 7: Chase of the Wolves

Firstly use the Spy to kill the guard patrolling the washing line, hide the body behind the line and grab the uniform. Send the Sapper and the Driver north gun down the three man patrol and collect the time bombs. Then on the other side of the map, send the Green Beret south and use the decoy to lure the enemy sentries into knife range. Beware though - if the alarm



MISSION 6

COMMANDOS

sounds, you'll be facing a 7 man patrol - not a good thing to happen. Destroy the barracks with an oil drum, and if you time it right you can take out the two man patrol as well. Killing of the rest of the sentries in that area is straightforward, once done get into the raft and head west around the coast.

Send the Sapper into the camp behind the washing line and set a bomb behind the barracks. Once it's safe, destroy the barracks, take out the remaining camp guards one at a time (with lethal injections where possible). Then send in the Driver to claim the tank, and send him on the rampage. Load everyone up into the boat and head over to the U-Boats. Drop the Sapper off, climb the ladder, set the bombs, and then run back to the boat and head off to the exit point to finish the mission.

Mission 8: Pyrotechnics

This level is VERY difficult and may take many replays to do perfectly. The key is the decoy which can be used to great effect here. You HAVE to kill all of the guards at the top of the cliff with the knife, so that you do not raise the alarm. Once all of these guys are dead, head down the slope, kill the guy next to the blue barrels and then proceed to take out all of the other guards.

Reserve your Sniper's ammo



MISSION 8



MISSION 8

for the sentries on top of the main building and the tanks at the far side of the camp. Now move the explosive barrels so that they link the two tanks with the water tank and also the blue tanks at the other side of the camp. In other words, you have to arrange a chain reaction of barrels, so that you only need to fire one shot before evacuating. Once the barrels have been placed, send the Green Beret back up the slope to the far end where he is able to climb down the rock face. Wait for the soldier behind the fortification to look away, then get the Green Beret to climb down and kill him. Now take out the guy in the machine-gun nest. Meanwhile, move the Sniper along the road and fire a shot at the barrel which starts the explosions. Hopefully you will be able to destroy all of the targets and escape in the evacuation vehicle before the guards start spewing from the bunker.

Mission 9: A Courtesy Call

This one is a little less tricky, thankfully. Take your time and have the Spy clear the camp of sentries. Once more, try not to raise the alarm or the 3 Panzers to the north will make a lot of trouble. Use the Sniper to kill the three man patrol. OK, now send the Driver in and move the Opel Blitz to the front of the three tanks. Get the Green Beret to arrange the explosive barrels to the south, to run in a

chain reaction which will destroy the radar station and the two central buildings. Please note, there are only JUST enough barrels to do the job, so any miscalculation will mean a re-load. Now have the Sapper plant one set of explosives between the



MISSION 7



MISSION 7



MISSION 7



MISSION 8

bunker and the Opel and the other set next to the barracks to the south. Move all of your men outside. Detonate the explosive and if all has been done correctly the first set will destroy the bunker and the Opel which will in turn destroy the tanks. The southern lot will destroy the barracks and set off the barrels, which will destroy the two central buildings. Well done! Just pile into the evacuation truck and head down the road to the west to complete the mission.

Mission 10: Operation Icarus

This is a good, fun mission. Use the Green Beret to kill the single guards in the start area and then get the Sapper to use his man-trap to take out the three man patrol. Enter the compound from the west, again carefully taking out the single guards, but

don't worry about the ones east of the main gate; they won't be a problem unless you alert the camp. Open the gate to release the prisoner then sneak your guys through the main gate to the north. Use the Sniper to kill all three of the machine gunners next to the road then head all of your guys minus the Sapper to the north. Have the Green Beret carry one of the explosive barrels near the plane back to the main gate and drop the barrel just inside the gate in the centre of the road. Get the Green Beret to spread the other barrels out between the Stukas and then send him into the plane along with the Sniper and the prisoner. Send the Sapper back into the camp and plant the time bomb next to the weapons store, then send him north, towards the plane as quickly as possible. The bomb will detonate, destroying the store and then the alarm will sound and one of the tanks will start pursuing you. The tank will then hit the barrel and explode, so you are in the clear. Once the Sapper reaches the plane, shoot the barrels to destroy the Stukas and off you go. Congratulations, another successful mission!

COMMANDOS



MISSION 9



MISSION 9

Mission 11: In the soup

Once again the Spy is the specialist of choice. With the single guards killed, the larger patrols are not too much of a problem for the rest of the team. Remember to use the man-trap, decoy and also the one grenade which you have to even the odds somewhat. There are also many explosive barrels around the area which can be used to either take out barracks or patrols. Very carefully check the map for climbable cliffs and ladders as these will make it possible to avoid some of the patrols. It is a VERY good idea to blow the tunnel to the north so that the northern patrols are unable to cause too many difficulties.

After blowing the four drilling rigs, pile into the light tank at the middle eastern area of the map and then head up the road towards the north west to complete the mission.

Mission 12: Up on the roof

This is something of a nasty mission as you immediately begin with your men scattered all across the level. The only unit to move is the Spy. He can be used to take out all of the rooftop guards, starting at the highest level and working downwards to ground level. Once these guys are dead, use the Sniper to kill the goons on the ground; thankfully he has plenty of ammo. Unfortunately, there are no real tricks to this one, it is just a case of being VERY careful. Once all of the guards are dead, head all of your guys south, freeing the prisoner in the process and grab the Kubelwagon to complete the mission.



MISSION 10



MISSION 10

Mission 13: David and Goliath

Climb the Green Beret up onto the dock and kill the four guards here. Now get the Marine into his scuba gear, wait for the supply boat to pass through the gate then swim through and go up the ramp on the left. Kill the guard here and use the small hut to open the gate. Head north and kill the two guards here and then go east, up another ramp and kill the nearby guards here. Head back to the start point, deploy the dinghy and collect all of your troops. Deposit the Driver on the ramp next to west dock where the artillery is located so that he use the gun if any patrol boats are alerted. Send the rest of the



MISSION 10

guys to the south-east ramp of the main dock and use the Sniper and man-trap to kill the patrols and the other guards. Use the hut at the far end of the dock to open the second gate then send the Marine into the mini-sub, through the gate. Now get the Sapper to plant his explosives next to the fuel dump and detonate them from a safe distance. Torpedo the ship and then get the Marine into the water and to one of the ramps where he can collect the other men. Detonate the explosive to blow the fuel dump then head for the main dock entrance. Use the Driver to destroy any patrol boats that are alerted, collect the Driver and head to the evacuation point in the south-west.

Mission 14: D-Day Kick Off

This is a real sticky mission at the start. You want to find a way to get the Driver to the tank as soon as possible. The Sniper should be reserved for the guards atop the guns, however the Marine's harpoon and the combination of decoy and man-trap are very effective for killing the majority of the guards. The Green Beret can also climb over the central hill to silently kill the guards at the other side of the camp without raising the alert. Once the tank has been



MISSION 11



MISSION 11



MISSION 10

secured the mission is relatively easy. Just Driver around and gun down all remaining guards and reinforcements. Be very careful not to hit the explosive barrels as without these you will be unable to destroy all of the guns and will therefore fail the mission. Once all of the guns are destroyed, just pile all of your men into the boat and head for the extraction point in the south-east corner of the map.

Mission 15: The End of The Butcher

Avoiding the five man patrol you will need to work your way up to the tall building in the north-west, where the Spy's uniform is. Once you have the uniform get your Sniper onto the flat area on the roof. From here you will be able to kill the General in the garden below. The alarm will then go off and you will need to get into a few gunfights to reach the enemy HQ on the east side. As soon as you have reached the HQ move a car in front of the HQ and shoot the engine from a distance. You may find it helpful to kill the patrol that is guarding your escape truck before you blow up the HQ. The key to completing the first part of this mission is to study the timing of the five man patrol, you'll have to be patient as their patrol is quite long.

Mission 16: Stop Wildfire

Try not to set the alarm off at the start of this mission and save one Sniper bullet for the end of the mission. Work your way down to the Spy's uniform on the other side of the railway, once you have it use your Spy to kill as many guards as possible without setting off the alarm. As soon as you can, move your Sniper down the east side of the riverbank until you have a clear shot of the detonator on the east side of the bridge. Next move your Spy behind the enemy Sapper on the west side of the bridge, and swim your Diver next to the small

COMMANDOS

island in the middle of the river under the bridge. You will need to kill the enemy Sappers simultaneously so start by killing the two on the centre island with the Diver, then use the Spy to kill the west side Sapper, and as the east side Sapper approaches his detonator shoot him with the Sniper before he reaches it. You can then escape in the truck.

Mission 17: Before Dawn

Use the Spy to go through the enemy camp and open the bridge. Then use the Spy and the Green Beret to clear the area just above the bridge. Use gunshots to lure guards over to your position and use the rocks as cover, try not to get too close to the camp as you will set the alarm off. Move your men next to the crane outside of the camp and then close the bridge to block off any guards. Next use the Spy to open the taps on the oil tanks, when no one is looking shoot the oil as it will ignite and block off any reinforcements. Before you release the prisoners you may want to clear the top area; to do this use your Diver to swim to the top right area and work his way left, you could also use the Spy to distract some guards to make the Diver's job easier. You can then release the prisoners and escape.



MISSION 12



MISSION 12

Mission 18: The Force of Circumstance

Start the mission by shooting off a couple of rounds to lure the guards over. The alarm will go off but don't worry, as only a few guards will come over. Clear out the area above; you can use your pistols to a certain extent but don't fire near the enemy barracks by the train tracks. You can, however, fire near the smaller barracks close to your original position as there are only a few men in it. Use the Diver to transport the Driver to the other side of the river, you will need to kill some guards on the top island to get the boat. Next move both the Diver and Driver down to the tank in the corner. Once you have possession of the tank you can take out as many guards as necessary in order for your



MISSION 12

Diver to ferry the Sapper over to the bottom island and collect the explosives. Once you have them you can blow up the bridge and escape in the truck.

Mission 19: Frustrate Retaliation

You need to work your way down to the small bay in the bottom left of the top area. This is best achieved by moving in an anti-clockwise direction from where you started the mission. Place a decoy over an open beartrap to lure in and kill guards in areas where they will not be spotted. You may find it helpful to blow up the enemy barracks in the top left corner, but this will make your mission more difficult. Save at least two bullets for the dogs in the lower sections and another two bullets for the gunners on the river banks. You will need to clear the lower left area of the map before moving upstream to the bay next to the rail tracks. Once you have crossed the tracks use your last Sniper bullet to kill the dog in the kennel and climb the wall with the Beret so he can flick the conveyor belt switch. The conveyor belt will now have changed direction so the rest of your team can use it to get into the base. Use the barrels and your bombs to blow up the missiles, and if you wish blow up the enemy barracks to stop enemy reinforcements.

north and kill as many guards as necessary so that you can crawl along the outer wall without being seen. Make sure you kill the guard on top of the enemy HQ. Crawl along the outer wall killing the guards on the way. Once you reach the east side of the wall kill the guard above the underwater gate and the patrolling guard just north of there. You can then use the Sniper to kill some of the guards on the topmost wall, but save one bullet for the man in the large cannon. Climb your beret down the ladder into the shooting range and open the underwater gate then move your Diver into the shooting range and lure as many guards as possible into the shooting range. Once you have cleared that area take out the guards on the southern exit and clear the area to the left. You can then kill the guards on the western exit and gain access to the Spy's uniform. Use the Spy and the beret to clear the eastern area to gain access to the tank, and remember to use the Sniper to take out the man on the cannon. Use the tank to destroy the missiles, enemy barracks and as many guards as you can. This should make it easier for the Sapper to reach the enemy HQ and blow it up. You can then escape in the tank. Well done!

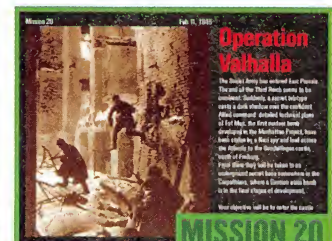
Gareth Jones



MISSION 19

Mission 20: Operation Valhalla

The last one, and boy is it hard! Expect this one to frustrate you for a long while before you conquer it. To begin with, use the Beret to scale the wall to his



MISSION 20

URBAN ASSAULT

STRATEGY GUIDE



Urban Assault could be the first really playable version of an awakening genre - that of Real Time/Action strategy.

Using mixes of first-person action and Real Time strategy group management, it's a game that keeps you involved every second that you're playing. All this involvement though can also make it a little tricky, but don't worry! We're here to help you with another PC PowerPlay strategy guide.

SINGLE PLAYER

In any real time strategy game it's important to know your units. More so in Urban Assault, because you have to drive them too. Follow this vehicle guide to devise the best strategies you can.

UNITS

Remember - primary weapons are fired with Joystick button 1 and machine guns are fired with Joystick Button 2. Missilecam can be activated for

homing missiles by launching with joystick button 3.

Vehicle name : Weasel

Class: Anti air tank

Main Weapon: Missile

Machine guns: Yes

The Weasel is the cheapest of all the units and not at all to be sneezed at. They really are a damn fast tank and literally zoom around an enemy causing a ton of confusion. This is best used as a pack unit. Build 60 of them and send them towards a host station. While enemy units are focussing on the numerous Weasels have a much heavier unit (preferably a Hornet) come in and destroy the enemy's power station. Weasels are devastating against air units. Best not to go first person in a Weasel, they're too fast to control effectively.

Vehicle name: Fox

Class: Anti air tank

Main Weapon: Missile

Machine guns: Yes

The Fox has heavier armour and a stronger punch than the Weasel, and its turbine diesel provides fast ground speed. Missiles are homing "lock-and-fire" and very quick, making it



especially effective against enemy helicopters. Against other tanks however, the Fox won't last. This is the first usable first person unit. Especially considering its main weapon is homing. Build lots of these during the first 8 levels of Urban Assault.

Vehicle name: Jaguar

Class: Tank

Main Weapon: Shell

Machine guns: Yes

A medium-grade tank, the Jaguar is excellent for destroying other ground units and enemy

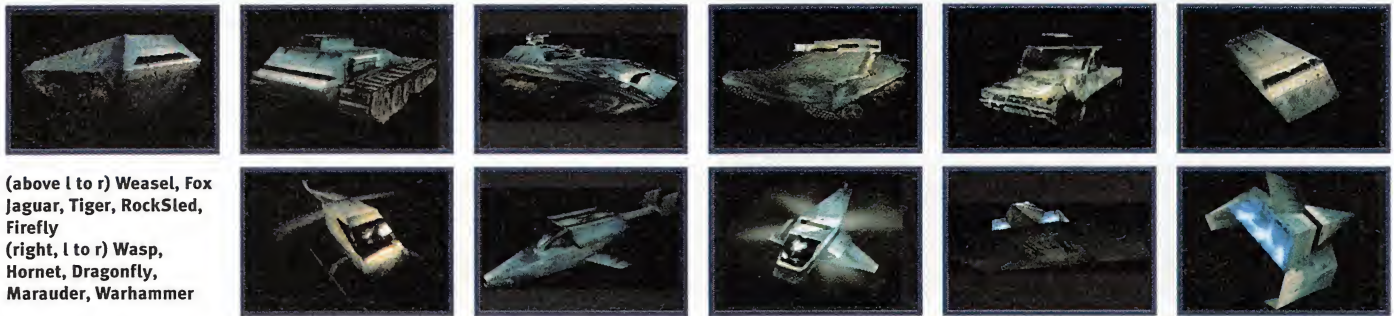
motherships. Its multishot shell cannon can volley off five consecutive shots before having to recharge. Jaguars are mostly useful when fighting Taerkast Leonids. Pair Jaguars up with Hornets for an absolutely devastating advantage. Jaguars travel the same speed as Hornets and this combined mix is virtually unstoppable. Vulnerable to air attack, so always have air support for it.

Vehicle name: Tiger

Class: Tank

Main Weapon: Shell

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(above l to r) Weasel, Fox, Jaguar, Tiger, RockSled, Firefly
(right, l to r) Wasp, Hornet, Dragonfly, Marauder, Warhammer

Machine guns: Yes

A very powerful tank with each shell doing 400 points of damage to the enemy. It carries considerably more armour and firepower than the Jaguar, making it an excellent choice against ground units and motherships. It's very slow though which means you need to escort it manually with Hornets but well worth the effort considering its kick. Very vulnerable to air attacks. Use Tigers whenever attacking a station, they can take boat loads of damage and give it back too.

Vehicle name: Rhino

Class: Mobile Rocket launcher

Main Weapon: Rocket

Machine guns: Yes

This is a rather specialized unit best used for clearing a path through enemy flak stations to the enemy host station. This heavy mobile artillery fires a "sub-nuke" rocket capable of leveling entire buildings in a single shot, making the Rhino very good for taking out an enemy power station and severely weakening them. Reload takes several seconds so do not use in a pitched battle. Always have a support squad nearby to protect it from attack by air units.

Vehicle name: Rock Sled

Class: Suicide vehicle

Main Weapon: Bomb

Machine guns: No

This fast light-truck conversion, heavily laden with high-concussion explosives, is your infiltration/subterfuge vehicle. To use the Rock Sled, you have to drive it manually to the target and upon arrival trigger its suicide bomb device manually. Its blast radius is wide so it's possible to take out entire enemy tank squads if detonated at the right time. These units rock hard! Use it when you want to wipe out HUGE amounts of enemy land units, just send 2 or 3 of these

into the enemy squad and BOOM, no more enemy.

Vehicle name: Firefly

Class: Helicopter

Main Weapon: Rocket

Machine guns: Yes

This lightly armoured "jet-copter" possesses great speed and maneuverability and a high firing rate, however to be effective you have to deploy them in large swarming squads. They're cheap so you can make a lot quickly but you'll often find yourself using them as "mechanized Chaff". Create enough of them to confuse enemy target systems. This unit is not to everyone's taste so don't build too many before testing them out.

Vehicle name: Wasp

Class: Helicopter

Main Weapon: Rocket

Machine guns: Yes

Wasps are fast and have the advantage of not needing to go on the road, which makes them excellent for taking territory. Best used to take out power stations, Stoudson triggers and tech upgrades quickly. They're too weak in combat though as the air-to-ground rockets are not guided, and they die quick.

Vehicle name: Hornet

Class: Helicopter

Main Weapon: Missile

Machine guns: Yes

Mmmmmm Yummy! This is the unit that does the absolute most work in this game. Use them on everything, their guided missile packs a serious punch and being airborne they can go anywhere. They run the same speed as Jaguars so make a large squadron consisting of both for a literally unbeatable combination. Use them to take down host and flak stations.

Vehicle name: Dragonfly

Class: Helicopter



Main Weapon: Missile

Machine guns: Yes

The Dragonfly is a pretty good chopper, it's definitely better in a pitched battle than a Hornet but it's not as effective as a Warhammer. Dragonfly's are best for penetrating deeply entrenched enemy ground targets. They fire rapid-firing "pulse-piercer" rockets, shells especially designed to destroy enemy heavy tanks. These are the same speed as Hornets and Jaguars so make squadrons consisting of all 3 for an extreme advantage.

Vehicle name: Falcon

Class: Jet

Main Weapon: Missile

Machine guns: Yes

Falcons make great scouts

since they are fast and maneuverable. Its speed to target is the fastest in The Resistance arsenal. Best used for destroying other air units, especially attack helicopters. It can do serious damage to a host station with its air to air missiles. To kill a host station with

them, make big sweeping passes and keep moving to avoid being hit. They are as fast as Foxes, so combine them with these ground units to further confuse the enemy.

Vehicle name: Marauder

Class: Bomber

Main Weapon: Bomb

Machine guns: No

The Marauder carries a powerful payload that is particularly effective against tanks. Used as a carpet-bomber, the Marauder is best suited for conquering enemy sectors and destroying unarmed enemy installations. Great to jump in one and conquer a whole lot of surrounding sectors. These run the same speed as Hornets and Jaguars, so be sure to send escorts in.

URBAN ASSAULT



Careful with the Jaguars though as marauders will destroy them quickly (accidental friendly fire). Best used to take out slow tanks that are anchored to the ground.

Vehicle name: Warhammer
Class: Jet
Main Weapon: Missile
Machine guns: Yes

Fast and powerful, this is an awesome unit. Strong armour, very fast and the weapon packs a SERIOUS punch. As an added bonus, the weapon is also fully homing. Use these to tear through Mikonian Air Cube formations. They also fight well unsupervised.

STRUCTURES & SPECIALS

Energy Stations

Once you possess the ability to create energy stations do so in an area with as much surrounding conquered squares as possible. Beam your Host Station over energy stations for optimal energy transference. Your vehicles, which are outfitted with plasma absorption ports throughout their exteriors, can also refuel by being near a power station. A crucial tactic to the game is to make sure all the surrounding sectors are conquered for an energy station to function at maximum.

Flak Stations

Build these around your Host Station as soon as you have them! Nothing protects your Host Station better than a wide belt of Flak Stations, preferably positioned on mountain tops

longest range of all weapons, far longer than any enemy Flak. Make sure the Rhino is protected by either Hornets or Foxes though and set their aggression level to 2 or they'll wander off.

Building Flak stations further out

Energy management plays an important part in UA. You can lock down certain energy to stop it from borrowing from other

energy sources. This can be useful by fully charging your Host Station and locking down beam energy (just click it and a red x will appear). Now you can jump out, build a Flak Station and jump back.



(where the tanks can't get too close to them). It also helps to back up Flaks with a swarm of Weasels on aggression level 2 to stop them from wandering away.

Radar Stations

Radar Stations are definitely worth spending the energy on. They give you an excellent extended field of vision. Protect with a few Flak Stations.

Stoudson Bomb Trigger

This device, when conquered in conjunction with other triggers like it, activates the countdown for the Stoudson Bomb. Whoever owns all Stoudson Triggers on a level controls the ultimate weapon for total level annihilation, while at the same time sparing his own forces from the effects of the bomb shockwave.

GENERAL TACTICS

Destroying Enemy Flak

Enemy Flak is a major pain in the butt and you'll go through a lot of units trying to get rid of it. One of the best ways to destroy it is with the Rhino since it has the

mixing squads in UA is a must. Constantly building one type of unit will seriously bring about your downfall. Things to remember, don't put Weasels and Tigers together in one squad and assign it to a far away target. The Tigers will fall far behind and will get trapped in the terrain. It's important to keep units with different functions but the same speed together. Always protect ground vehicles with AA-units and always protect Bombers (Marauders) with attack planes (Falcons/Warhammers).

Beamgate

When beaming out, patience is a virtue. Don't take cheap units such as Weasels and Wasps, instead have the patience to bring the more expensive units in.

Construction

Since most levels start you off relatively near a Power Station, and beaming to a Power Station is "free", having a large Beam Energy Reserve is not as important as Creation Energy or Host Station Life Energy. To gather energy for creating units more quickly, stop collecting energy for beaming your Host Station. With the beam energy reserves stopped, your energy absorption will be diverted into your Host Station energy and Creation energy which are more critical at the beginning of any mission. Once you have a stronger foothold, re-enable the beam reserves.

Capturing sectors (Conquering tip)

The best way to capture sectors is to create a single Weasel, take control of it. Adjust your sights to the ground and start firing away. Now, just zoom off and you'll capture sectors as fast as!

Cornering

If you're near a map corner, go for it as fast as possible. Build a power station in the corner and beam your Host Station on top of it. Now, for maximum power you only need to hold 3 sectors instead of 8. Build some flak stations in the 3 sectors for the ultimate protection.

Taking out the enemy Host Station

Always try to knock out the enemy power stations before attacking the host. This will cut down on the stream of enemy-produced units. It's not always good to take over an enemy power station since it may affect your absorption rate and actually give you less energy than you had before. Secondly the computer will often try and take a lost energy station back; completely destroying it forces it further back in the map.

Power management

Don't build too many power stations as it may actually give you less energy than you had before. Send out a few Weasel squads and conquer as much terrain as possible (see conquering tip). If a new power station decreases your rate grab a vehicle and start shooting at your own power station, watch the energy rate and you will actually see it improve while you knock down the rating of your own Power Station.

Mixing Squads

Unlike other RTS games,

URBAN ASSAULT

Pseudo cheat: How to take out a host station

Create a single Rhino and take control of it. Now drive the vehicle so the enemy's host station is just visible in your view. Aim at the host station and start firing missiles. Don't worry if your target sight doesn't lock onto the enemy, the missiles will still make contact and cause damage. It'll be destroyed in no time.

Firefly chaff

The Fireflies are pretty useless, however as chaff they're great for confusing the enemy AI. They're cheap so build about 30 of them. Leave them at your Host Station and now when the CPU attacks, the Fireflies will constantly confuse it causing it to attack them and not your precious power station (weakening it).

Bug: The slope trick

If you position your tank just below the peak of a slope you will be able to shoot enemy tanks before they can shoot you. When you're on the plateau of a slope, back your tank away from the edge enough so that the enemy's fire cannot make contact. Start firing just before the other tank reaches the top and you'll be able to severely damage the other tank if not destroy it before it's able to return fire. Remember to grab the energy left behind as this will repair your own unit.

Scout

It's important to use scouts as much as possible. Build one first up and make sure that you pilot it yourself. The AI control for scouts is ridiculously slow



THE TOUGH MISSIONS

The first and foremost tip that can be given to any mission is to RUSH. Imagine you're playing Red Alert on the net and just constantly rush the computer. Host Stations are weak so there's not really much of a base to protect. Instead, send out a scout to find the enemy's Host Station and rush it with all you've got. In maps where there are more than one enemy it's crucial to destroy one of them within the first 7 minutes of game play.

Parasite City

Start by attacking the Mykonians since they have all the Stoudson triggers. Take all the triggers (located in the upper left corner) then sit back and laugh as the Stoudson goes off destroying the remaining Taerkastens.

Black Wadi

If you retreat to the upper left corner your opponents will fight between themselves giving you time to create a massive assault force. Make sure the force is big enough to destroy both enemies. If you only manage to destroy one of them all attention will be turned onto you.

Blue Casbash

Attack the Black Sect first and although you will probably not be able to finish them off the Taerkastens will clean up the leftovers.

Moonlight City

Build lots of Flak stations and make many preemptive strikes against the Ghorkov power stations.

Hamburger Hill

Go straight for the Stoudson and use it.



Peacemaker

Retreat to the lower right of the map to get out of harm's way and let the Ghorkovs and Taerkastens weaken each other.

Smile

This one is too easy. Make about 50 Warhammers and go straight for the enemy Host Stations. This way you can do the level in a few minutes.

Slaughter Field

Stay where you start and build a lot of flak stations for defense.

MULTIPLAYER

Multplayer under Urban Assault is very different. Firstly, the maps are quite small and you're generally limited to building only 12 units. This makes the game a lot more tactical with mixed groups and first person control essential.

Technology squares

Build a scout and immediately search for the tech squares. Take them as fast as you can and hold them. In multiplayer, the more tech squares you capture, the more varied units you can build. This also stops your opponent from building better units.

Scout

Always Scout, the number of people that don't do this and therefore lack situational awareness is incredible. Just scouting the terrain and knowing what's out there can make all the difference.

Jump in

First person is what really makes a difference in UA multiplayer and for that reason jump into whatever unit you're most comfortable in. Once in though, seek out your opponent (His unit will have his name over it) and concentrate purely on it.

Your AI units will slug it out together but if you can constantly harass your opponent, you're effectively stopping him from leading his units into battle. Other things to consider is that units controlled by the player have stronger shields and weapons. By forcing him to attack you and waste ammo on your stronger unit, it stops him from quickly taking out your other units which are weaker to him.

Finally, in single player if all else fails there's always the possibility to cheat. I found the world.ini file in the Urban Assault directory and you should be able to give yourself some advantages with it.

Open up the Data Folder, then open the file "world.ini". In there you should see at the top

```
begin_misc
one_game_res = no
shell_default_res = 640_480
game_default_res = 640_480
max_impulse = 10000
beam_energy_start = 1000
beam_energy_add = 100
unit_limit = 80
unit_limit_type = 1
unit_limit_arg = 5
end
```

Modifying Beam energy start should be enough to allow you to get through the missions with absolute ease.

Jere Lawrence



1-300-656-972

Popcorn

Strategy

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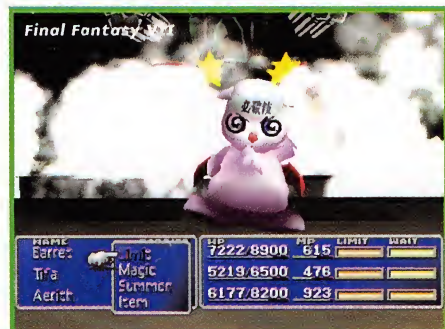
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TIPS & TACTICS

The important bits the game manuals left out



FINAL FANTASY VII

★ It doesn't take long for your inventory to overflow with things that you never use. Hang on to them; you'll need them later when the combat gets harder. Battle is the most time-critical event in the game, so keep battle items in the first few slots for quick access. When hunting Chocobos, put the greens in the first slot so you can use them before your quarry runs away.

★ Here's a weird tip that can help you win a losing battle. Try doing something crazy - like attacking yourself or "help" your enemy. For example, if an enemy imprisons one of your characters, you can sometimes break free by attacking your own character. In addition, at times you can damage an undead enemy by casting life or using Phoenix Down on it.

★ Always keep trying. Just because it doesn't work the first time, doesn't mean it never will. For example, there is a rare, early Megalixer (restores everyone's

health and magic points!) hidden in a cabinet on the top floor of the inn in Kalm Town. At first it seems out of reach but keep trying and eventually you'll get it. Keep this in mind for other obstacles.

GAME, NET & MATCH

★ Just like real tennis, the key to victory is preparation. Watch the ball as it leaves your opponent's racket, get into position quickly, stop completely, and bring the racket back early. And don't forget: hold the button longer for a powerful, more precise shot. Soon you will be ready for Wimbledon.

★ The best serve isn't necessarily the deepest serve—it's the widest. Work on getting the ball to bounce as close as possible to the singles line and you will get your fair share of service winners and maybe even the odd ace or two. If the ball does make it back, your opponent will be so far from the center of the court that you have a nice setup for your next shot.

★ A nice rule to follow is to be patient. Just take a leaf out of Pete Sampras' gameplay and let your opponent make the mistake.

★ For service returns, try using a normal (hard) forehand stroke targeted behind your opponent.

Usually this will make your opponent look like a flat footed fool.

★ Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your rival before you hit the court, then hammer away at his weak spots. You will notice the difference.

MOTOCROSS MADNESS

★ Speeding through a jump that is followed by a turn, could result in you missing the turn and heading off track over the berm or, worse, kissing a wall.

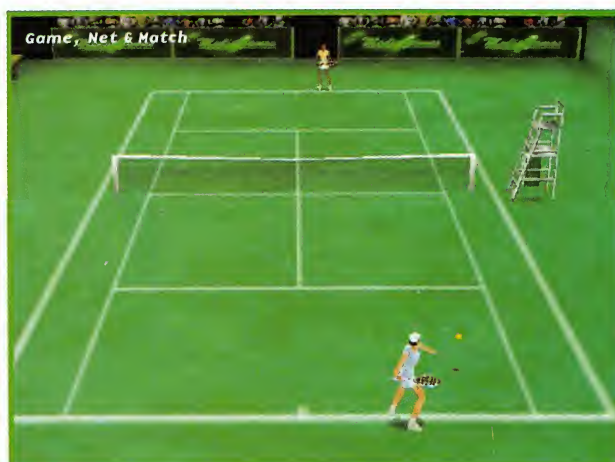
★ At the stunt quarries follow the AI motorbikes to find a good circuit with plenty of jumps; then just repeat that circuit over and over, pulling the same stunts to score points.

★ Leaning back and forward can be just as important as steering, especially when you're landing or going up slopes.

★ To avoid flipping over the handlebars, try to land on your rear wheel first.

★ To go forward, don't shove the joystick all the way into the forward position. Keep the joystick's forward/back position nearly centered. If you shove it all the way forward, the rider's weight will shift over the handlebars, making the back end very light and loose. Likewise, pulling back on the joystick makes the front end light, and you'll tend to pop wheelies or lose steering control.

★ Landing jumps is pretty much a matter of experience and the condition of the ground ahead of you. First, you need enough speed to land the jump without crashing on the landing ramp. Second, you need just the right amount of speed and altitude or you'll overshoot the landing ramp. You can intentionally overshoot the landing ramp if you want to turn quickly.





***** Races are often won in the turns. Start the race with your weight forward, hit the gas, and then change gears quickly. The first person into the turn (grabbing the holeshot) usually places in the race.

DOMINION STORM

***** Know your unit's effectiveness against various targets. There is nothing worse than charging into the enemy only to find his unit is invulnerable to small-arms fire.

***** Keep an eye out for engineers sneaking about. In general, your base should be surrounded by cheap infantry on all sides—not just the side facing the enemy.

***** The AI gets easily confused about sending units to help out even when its colleagues are being slain nearby. Whenever you hear combat, make sure your allies are actually helping out.

***** Be wary of all four races. Each have different and varied styles of play. Below are the best ways of using the races:

Humans: The key word for the Human forces is balance. The Humans might not be the fastest or strongest race, but their armour is good, build time is average, and their units are relatively inexpensive. This makes them ideal for most missions. What this means is that when you go up against another race, you only need to be concerned with defending against the other race's strengths and targeting their inherent weaknesses.

Darkens: The Darken are tough and defensive by nature, which makes them ideally suited for combat on the planet's surface. Even though their units are slow to build and quite costly, the Darken are, nevertheless, formidable opponents. Time and time again they are thrown into situations that would easily wipe out the other race whole, but they are always able to come out on top. The key to a successful Darken campaign are the resources, since every unit you build costs you more than most of your enemies. Overall their missions are probably the most challenging in the game.

Mercs: If you have a destructive nature and enjoy blowing things up, you'll love the Mercs. They have the most powerful weapons - which can at times cause more than double the hitting power of their enemy counterparts. Unfortunately, the Merc believe in the "one shot one kill" rule assuming if you shoot something it stays dead. Thus, they spend very little time worrying about armour. As a result they have the weakest armour in the game. Playing

as the Mercs is challenging, but a successful Merc battle rarely lasts long.

Scorps: The Scorps are a unique breed. Their units are the least expensive in the game, and their build times are the shortest as well. The end result of this is that you can field more units much faster than your enemies. This also means you can grab resources such as Material Wells faster than everyone else, and defend them better. The bad news is that your units have weak armour, so you'll need to field more of them to survive. Defending what you get will be your biggest challenge.

BATTLEZONE

***** When fighting in tank to tank, or tanks to tanks combat use strafing to avoid getting seriously hit.

***** When attacking a well defended base, always try to come in through the back and take out the enemy Recycler first, then any remaining silos, then the Factory, then the Armoury. After that take out anything left.

***** When attacking a base with multiple Gun Towers, your primary target isn't the Gun Towers, but rather their power source. You shut them down and they can't fire at you.

***** When building a well defended base, and you are setting up your Gun Towers, always have additional power sources nearby so if one gets blown to pieces, the gun tower can still fire.

***** The best defensive structure is the Gun Tower, because its range and power are a great combination. Remember, if your power structure goes down, your Gun Towers are out of commission until you supply more power.

***** To stop an early Bomber rush, always start the game inside of a tank (Grizzly, Bdog Grizzly, Czar), and make the first ship out of your Recycler a Scout.

***** Never leave tanks unattended, because the enemy can come to your base, snipe one of your tanks and steal it from you. Instead make each tank defend a building (Recycler, Factory, Armoury, etc.)



ORACLE

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Write to Oracle at:

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FINAL FANTASY VII



How does one capture and ride a Chocobo in Final Fantasy VII? They are very elusive. Do you have any hunting tips o' wise one?

Penny and Katie
Internet



There are many ways in catching a Chocobo after you've visited the Chocobo farm. Try using the "Equip Chocobo Lure". Next run around the world map following the Chocobo tracks. When you fight a battle, a Chocobo will appear on the enemy's side - don't attack it! Instead feed it greens to keep it from getting away. Quickly destroy the other creatures before the Chocobo escapes. You should now be able to ride the Chocobo. If you dismount, it will run away.

MORTAL KOMBAT 4



I keep getting my ass kicked in Mortal Kombat 4. How about some tips on how to master the game?

Goro's right arm
Internet



The "Where's Dildo?" is a game making fun of "Where's Waldo?".

Find 32 of these little suckers, and you get a bonus wallpaper.bmp file. Dildos will pop up in the same locations more than once, so be sure to recheck locations to find him. I don't want to expose all of them but a few of the harder ones can be found at:

- 1 - Help/About the Designers Screen
- 2 - Larry's Cabin 0: Behind Toilet
- 3 - Lobby: Behind Right Column
- 4 - Clothing Optional Pool (Cabana): Right Bushes
- 5 - LoveMaster 2000: Booth #4
- 6 - Best Dressed Competition: On Terminal
- 7 - Pair O' Dice Casino: On Blackjack Table
- 8 - Bowling Competition: Behind Rhino
- 9 - Kitchen: Hiding as a Sausage
- 10 - Forward Deck: On Sheep Topiary



As with all Mortal Kombat rookies, don't try to get too fancy with the complicated combo moves. A good, old-fashioned plan of attack that maximizes movement and quick slashing strikes (especially crouching uppercuts) will help keep you alive longer. Don't deviate from the basics until you've had a chance to master the combos in Practice mode. If all else fails practice some of the moves on your baby sister, you wuss.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7



What's the story with the "Where's Dildo?" game in Leisure Suit Larry 7? Where do I find them?

Mariano Salabert
Sydney

INTERSTATE 76



How do I shake off the cops in Episode 7? I know they have been paid to bring me in, but I don't want to give up without one hell of a fight. Trouble is that they call in a helicopter for backup. Help me kick some police butt.

John Kavalieros
Gosford

Interstate 76

***** These cops are pretty hard and they get worse during the course of the mission. Try to get the police separated so you can take them on one by one. Once you've destroyed one of the cops, they'll send in the police chopper. It's hard to down it without heat seeking missiles so you have two alternatives in blowing it skyhigh. The first is in the canyon near the second road block (just turn in circles and it will crash into the wall) or at the dead end near the barn at the northwest end of Bauxite. Just stay close to the cliff walls and the helicopter will eventually crash.



SWAT 2

? Can you help me with SWAT 2 from Sierra? I am stuck in the bank robbery mission [mission 5]. How do I complete the mission without losing any hostages and arresting the three suspects.

Waldoff & Baker
Internet

***** The suspects usually demand a getaway car. When they demand it give it to them otherwise they start shooting hostages until they get it. Once the car is on its way quickly get your team to enter the building and rescue the hostages. If a suspect comes out towards you with a weapon raised use your best judgement to determine what you should do. The Dirty Harry technique works well but be careful as the suspects sometimes do a runner. If one does be sure to catch him or you lose points for his escape. When entering the vault be careful because a suspect may kill a hostage if he sees you and you don't want that on your resume.

SPACE QUEST 5

? I just started playing Space Quest 5 and already I'm having trouble with the SAT. What can I do?

Doug Parkinson
West Haven

***** If you're like most people, you'll have to cheat to pass the SAT. Use the eye icon to peek at your classmates' answers and mark them on your test. The correct answers for the SAT test are: number one, "d"; number two, "e"; number three, "e"; number four, "c"; number five, "e"; number six, "c"; number seven, "e"; number eight, "d"; number nine, "a"; number ten, "a." Who said cheats never prosper?

ZORK GRAND INQUISITOR

? How do I get to the magic school in Zork Grand Inquisitor? I am trying to complete the first test with no luck. Can you steer me in the right direction?

Lynn Clover
Buxton

***** There are three tests you have to pass to get to the magic school. For the first one, match the bottom two rows to the volcano top. For the second one, match them to the thing with the Z on the top. For the third one, the first row is the top of the window with the green leaves & stuff around it. Leave the bottom the same and turn the middle one

until you get the right one. You will hear a sound, and a window will appear. Click on it to enter GUE Tech.

SPYCRAFT

? I know I'm so close to finishing Spycraft but have come to standstill. The helicopter has dropped me off and I've shot all the bad guys and followed the radio signal. I've killed Blake [nice shot too] and picked up the laptop he dropped. As soon as I boot it up it starts a countdown. A few moments later "kaboom". Any help would be appreciated.

Thang Lu
Internet

***** Download as many files as you can to your Intel-Link and then stop and throw it out of the chopper. Timing is critical.

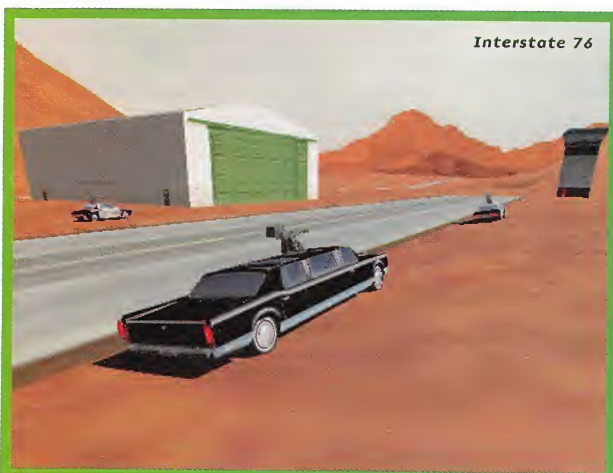
BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD

? I'm stuck in Beavis And Butthead's Virtual Stupidity. In the veteran's hall how do I open the lid on the tank?

David Fazio
Maroubra

***** Go to the coffee shop and drink the cups of coffee on each table. Proceed to the end of the room and talk to the man in the brown sweater. Ask him about coffee. When he leaves "Get" coffee and Beavis will become the great Cornholio ["where's the teepee for my bungalow"] Under the influence of Cornholio return to the Veteran's hall. You should now be able to open the lid on the tank.

Interstate 76



CODE

Go on! Spoil all the fun! See if we care!

M.A.X. 2

To access all the campaigns, edit the Max2.ini file and use the following settings:
current_campaign_1_mission=1
current_campaign_mission=49
last_campaign_played=49

For standalone, single player missions type in these codes:

[MAXSPY] - Lets you view all units on the map,
[MAXSURVEY] - Shows the locations of all the material and gold resources.

[MAXSTORAGE] - Gives your units and buildings the maximum amount of material.

[MAXSUPER] - Upgrades your units to the highest possible level.

GET MEDIEVAL

Type these codes:

mpkfa - God Mode

mppos - Global position

mpfps - Frames per second

CARMAGEDDON 2 - DEMO

If you want to play as any car in this month's CD demo (excluding the truck), then all you have to do is change one line in the GENERAL.TXT (in the data directory), which reads EAGLE3.TXT (it's right after 'Cars to use as defaults:') to anything you want. The names of the cars you can use are found in the data/cars dir. Note: any attempt by me to change the car to the truck (using VOLVO.TXT) caused the demo to lock up at the title screen.

WAR GAMES

These codes can be accessed in single player mode by hitting 't' and typing them or by hitting one of the F1...F4 keys.

eyeofgod - Allows extra level of zoom on lower level machines

twobyfour - Builds units (e.g: twobyfour dragoon)

hermes - Speeds up building of units

donkeys - Anything that shoots a missile shoots jeeps instead of missiles

morningafter - Removes fog of war

gimmiegimmie - Allows you to build everything, even without command center

unclejohn - God mode

chaching - Adds 10,000 to cash total every time it is entered

mrmuscle - Upgrades player's armour

bigsofty - Downgrades enemy armour

coffee - Upgrades player's speed

beer - Downgrades enemy's speed

shaft - Upgrade player's firepower

shank - Downgrade enemy's firepower

NEED FOR SPEED 3

Type the cheats below at any menu to activate the cheat.

rushhour - Race with lots of traffic on the road.

empire - Race on the Empire City track.

elninor - Race with the El Nino car.

merc - Race with the Mercedes CLK GTR.

gofast - Make your car go super fast in Single Race mode.

allcars - Enable all cars including Pursuit Vehicles.

Type the cheats below then click RACE to drive the different non-player cars.

go01 - Miata

go02 - Toyota Landcruiser

go03 - Cargo Truck

go04 - BMW 5 Series

go05 - 71 Plymouth Cuda

go06 - Ford Pickup with Camper Shell

go07 - Jeep Cherokee

go08 - Ford Fullsize Van

go09 - 64/65 Mustang

go10 - 66 Chevy Pickup

go11 - Range Rover

go12 - School bus

go13 - Taxi - Caprice Classic

go14 - Chevy Cargo Van

go15 - Volvo Station Wagon

go16 - Sedan

go17 - Crown Victoria Cop Car

go18 - Mitsubishi Eclipse Cop Car

go19 - Grand Am Cop Car

go20 - Range Rover Cop Car/Ranger Vehicle

go21 - Cargo Truck (same as 03)

DESCENT: FREESPACE

To activate the code type **WWW.VOLITION-INC.COM**, then hold the tilde (~) key and type the following:

C - Send message to enemies.

Shift C - Toggle availability of countermeasures for all ships.

K - Kill target.

Shift K - Destroy targeted subsystem.

Alt K - 10% damage to yourself.

I - Invulnerability.

Shift I - Toggle invulnerability for target.

O - Toggle Descent-style physics.

Shift W - Infinite Weapons for ALL ships, including yours.

W - Infinite weapons for just YOUR ship.

G - Mark all primary goals complete.

Shift G - Mark all secondary goals complete.

Alt G - Mark all bonus goals complete.

9 - Scroll forward through all secondary weapons.

Shift 9 - Scroll backward through all secondary weapons.

0 - Scroll forward through all primary weapons.

Shift 0 - Scroll backward through all secondary weapons.

R - Issue a rearm request for target.

Note: You CANNOT advance the mission if you activated the cheat codes.



SIN (DEMO)

Remember last month's Sin demo? Here are a few cheats to give you an unfair advantage. Press the tilde (~) key to bring down the console screen and enter these codes:

/HEALTH 999 999 health

/WUSS all weapons

/SUPERFUZZ God mode

/NOCOLLISION no clip

/WALLFLOWER no target

INCOMING

Type **NUMBERONEDACRESTREET** at the main menu to unlock a hidden menu. With this menu you can access many cheats including 5 new secret levels.

Hold down SHIFT and type:

WIREWEWAITING - Turns off the textures

WHATSTHEPOINT - Turns graphics to the dots

SOLIDASAROCK - Invulnerability

FLATBROKE - No shading

GOURAUD - Gouraud shading on

OLDMACDONALD - Protect farm from jumping COWS !!!

FLYMETOTHEMOON - Racing in the moon

HAVEALL - You got it all

SUPERDAISY - One shot kills 'em all

SUPERSHOOT - Same as SUPERDAISY

INVULNERABILITY - That's just what it seems

INFINITELIVES - And so is this one

INFINITEWEAPONS - Infinite weapons

MASTEROFTHEUNIVERSE - At least it changes textures on & off

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

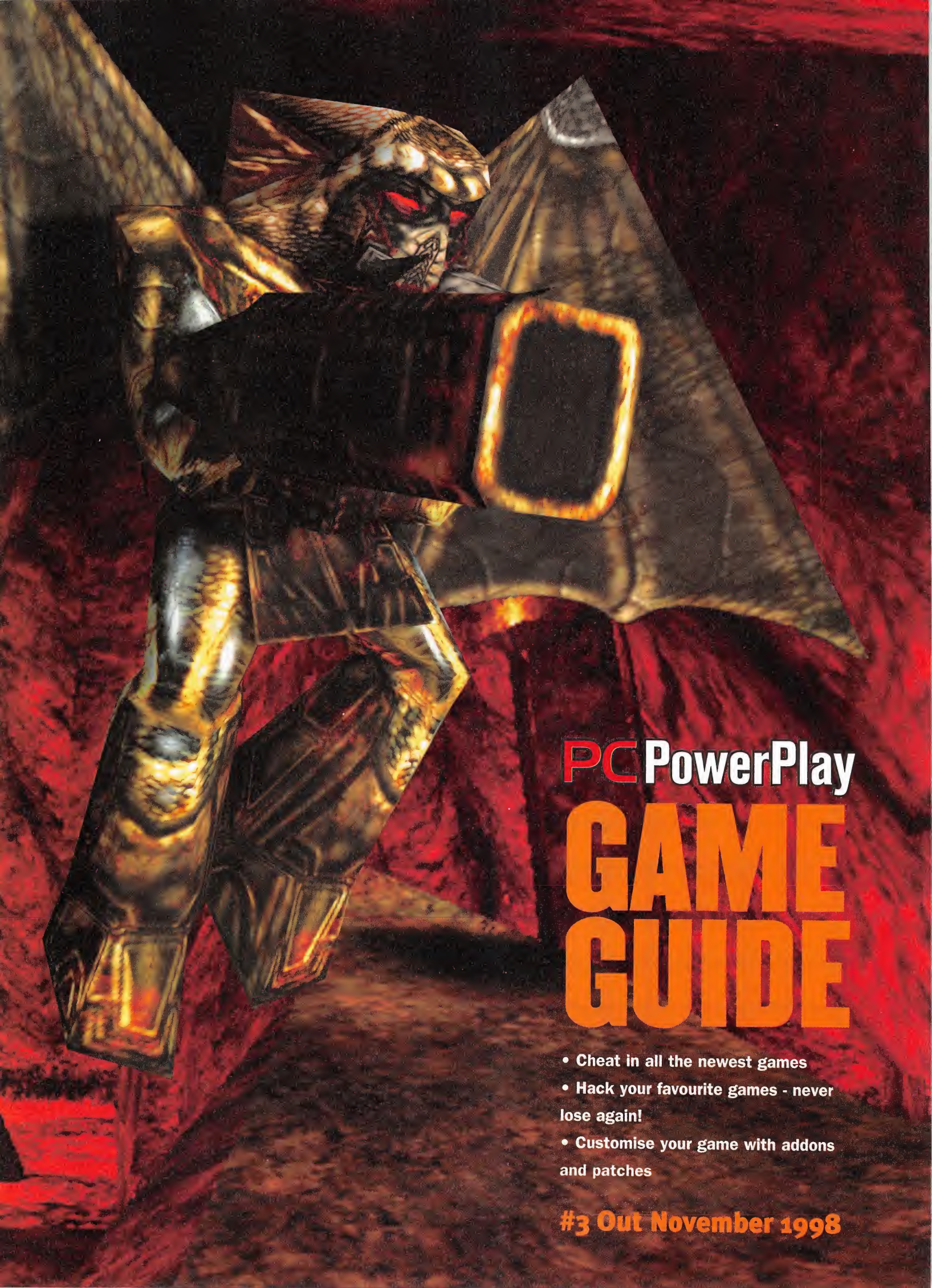
Go into the practice mode and go up to difficulty. Hold LK and BLK for 10 seconds. The following four options will then appear:

Endings - On/Off

Fatality 1 - On/Off

Fatality 2 - On/Off

Stage Fatality - On/Off



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When you write, remember to include as much pertinent information as possible. Send your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT and any associated *.INI files for Windows that might tell me more about your problem. Give me as detailed an explanation as you can and be sure to include as much detail as possible about your PC. Feel free to email your questions or, if you want to snail mail, please remember to write clearly or better still, print your letters. Please note that due to the volume of messages we receive, we cannot guarantee a response to your queries.

Setup
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick st.
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

PING PROBLEMS

Q In issue 26, Paul Jones asked a question about ping times. I tried to ping a few random sites, and every time a message was displayed four times, saying "Request timed out", leaving me with a 100% loss rate. Does this mean my ping time sucks or it just doesn't work? Help!

Wiplash
Internet

A You can't just ping random sites, you need to ping a site you know exists and you know is up. If you ping a site that doesn't exist, of course the packets will time out! If you're trying to find out your speed to a game server you want to play on, try using that site. If you want to get a reliable and accurate reading, try this command:

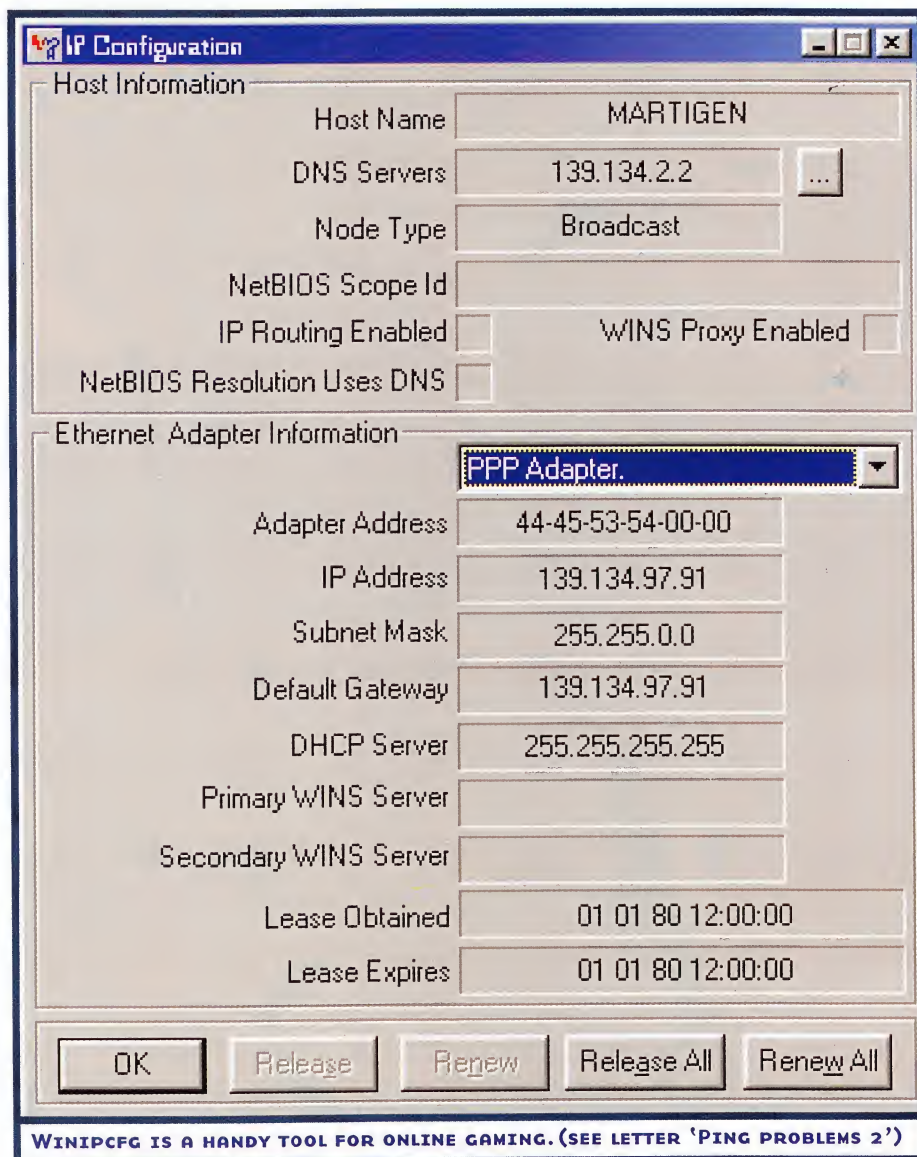
ping -n 25 -l 56 <target site>

This will use larger packet sizes and ping 25 times (rather than the standard 4 times), giving you an average at the end.

TO UPGRADE OR NOT

Q I noticed in the September issue of your mag an article that advised against upgrading Windows 95 to 98, stating that a clean install of Windows 98 was preferable, as after an upgrade many existing applications/games may play up.

Wouldn't a clean install of Windows 95, followed immediately by an upgrade to Windows 98 before any other stuff is installed, be an alternative? Or are



games/other programs still likely to encounter problems afterwards?

It's just that I've bought the Windows 98 upgrade, and after seeing that article, am hesitant to install it!

Steve Walley
Internet

A Woah, no way! Installing Windows 95 and then Windows 98 is no better than installing over a used Windows 95 installation. The whole point of a clean install is to start from nothing and install Windows 98, so that the only files on your system are those belonging to Windows 98.

You don't have to worry about installing Windows 98 - and you don't need to install Windows 95 first just because you've purchased the 'upgrade' version of Windows 98. The 'full' version and 'upgrade' version of Windows 98 are identical, except that the upgrade version checks for proof of purchase of a previous Windows OS. If you have your Windows 95 disks or CD, that's all you need. Just insert it when Windows 98 asks.

PING PROBLEMS 2

Q You are always talking about ping and how good it is but I don't know where to get it from. Where can I download it from?

Tobias Jones
Internet

A Windows comes with ping and a whole heap of other handy tools. Since some of you may not be aware of the Internet tools that come with Windows, here's a list of the ones you'll find most useful:

PING — Pings hosts to determine response time
TRACERT — Traces the path to a host, useful to determine how your packets are getting there

WINIPCFG — Shows your current IP address (you'll need it for online gaming) and other trendy info

IPCONFIG — DOS version of WINIPCFG (or rather, WINIPCFG is a Windows version of IPCONFIG)

FTP — Who says you need one of those new fangled GUI based FTP programs? FTP does the job, if you don't mind the DOS interface.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

THE CELERON DEBATE

Q I was just reading through your September issue, it's as great as ever! But then I stumbled across something you wrote in the Tech Setup section: "The Celeron isn't a gamers CPU, leave it to the low-end workstations it was designed for". Now you're right, it is a low end CPU. Especially the 266MHz version. But check this out: bundle your Celeron 300MHz CPU with a BX motherboard, 64M or even 128M PC100 RAM, a good video card and put the extra money into a Voodoo2. Now you're going to say: "So what, it's still a no-good CPU". But here comes the trick: Set the CPU clock to 4.5x 100MHz! Yeah, I'm not kidding, my 300MHz CPU runs at 450MHz! That's partly because the Celeron has no cache (which is clock sensitive) but also because all the other components are high end.

With the motherboard I can upgrade to a 500MHz PII as soon as it's available. So what more could I want? Really guys, you should rethink your position on Celeron CPUs...

Robert Knoeckel
Internet

A You've brought up a very good point. In my reply to Alex I said a Celeron 266 doesn't perform the same as a Pentium II 266 due to the lack of an L2 cache, but what about over-clocking? The answer isn't as simple as it seems.

Firstly, the Celeron is more over-clockable than a PII. Why? Because the limiting factor in the PII is the very thing that gives it the speed advantage - the L2 cache. As these RAM chips heat up, they can cause errors in the data they store if they are pushed beyond their limit. This, however, is less true of PII 400MHz chips and above, because the heatsink that touches the PII CPU also touches the L2 cache chips, giving greater heat dissipation for the L2.

Secondly, and most importantly, don't be deceived by numbers. Yep, you can overclock a Celeron to 400MHz but are you getting 400MHz performance? Nope, not at all. The L2 cache is there for a reason, it DOES provide an excellent performance boost by storing temporary information during calculations and caching main memory. Depending on the application, the lack of an L2 can absorb as much as 100MHz of that extra calculating power you've achieved by overclocking your Celeron. That is, an overclocked Celeron 400MHz performs only a little faster than a PII 300MHz chip. Of course, this does depend on what you're running. Number crunching will be slower, but if complex calculations aren't required, an overclocked Celeron 400MHz can run as fast as a PII 350MHz or higher.

There is another issue to consider - Celerons use a 66MHz bus. This means the

maximum memory bandwidth to main memory is almost half that on a 100MHz system using a PII. So you get a slight performance drop here as well.

Now, to further muddy the waters we have to look at Intel's reaction to the public over the Celeron. In response to the L2 issue Intel has now released (by the time you read this) a new version of the Celeron called the Celeron A. Lets get one thing straight - this is no Celeron CPU. This is a gamer's dream. Let me explain why:

Intel decided to add an L2 to the Celeron afterall, except that it's integrated on the CPU die, not as separate chips on the CPU cartridge. This means that, as with the Xeon, the Celeron A's L2 runs as fast as the CPU itself. Yep, a Celeron A 400MHz has a 400MHz L2 (whereas a PII 400MHz would have a 200MHz L2). They can do this because the L2 for the Celeron A is small - only 128k (compared to the PII's 512k). But remember how the L2 is more beneficial for some applications than others? That's because some applications cause the CPU to need more temporary storage space. If it needs space and can't get it, it slows down.

Except, games (most, at least) don't need much more than 128k. And if they do, being able to store and retrieve at real time has to be almost as good as being able to store more, but having the CPU wait around for information to arrive as with a slower L2.

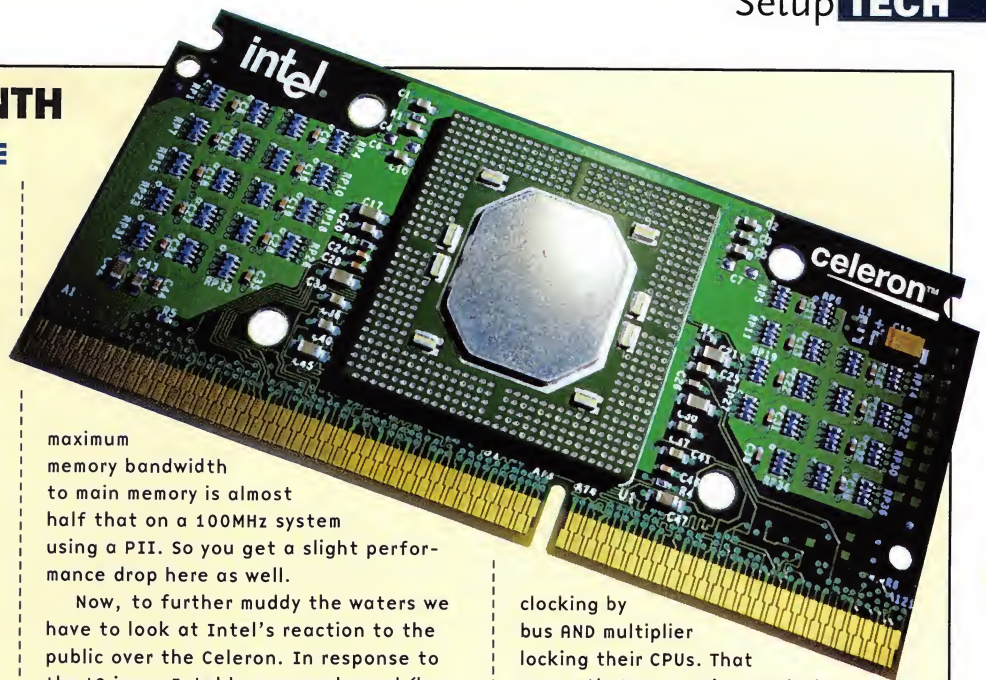
So what you have here is a cheap, very fast, PII CPU. In fact, because of the integrated L2, a Celeron A will be able to outperform a PII of the same MHz for most operations (though the difference is very slight indeed). And, because the L2 is integrated into the CPU die, heat dissipation is as efficient for the cache as it is for the CPU, so overclocking to a moderate degree should be fine.

The Celeron A still runs at 66MHz bus however, and recently Intel has decided to once and for all clamp down on over-

clocking by bus AND multiplier locking their CPUs. That means that you can't overclock unless the motherboard is designed to override both these limitations.

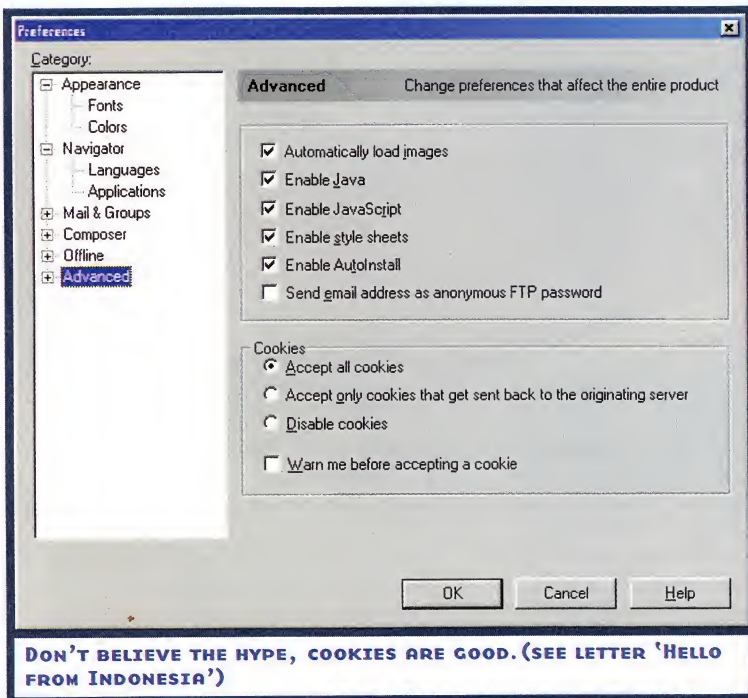
All up, the original Celeron is a cheap CPU, and yes it can be overlocked by a great deal - but so can a normal PII. And when you overclock a PII, you also overclock the L2 increasing performance further. It all comes down to price - as always in the PC industry, you get what you pay for. If I were writing this last week I would have said get a PII if you can afford it, because the performance boost of over-clocking a PII is far greater than the boost from overlocking a Celeron (the extra MHz gained from an overclocked PII isn't wasted making up for the lack of an L2 as it is with the Celeron). But this week, after hearing about the Celeron A, you can bet that this is THE CPU to get. Unless you're a programmer, scientist or are heavily into databases, the Celeron A will suit you just fine. For gamers, it's ideal.

If you think about it, Intel has shot itself in the foot. The Celeron A and the Xeon both use CPU clocked L2s, and the performance benefit is so great why would you go for anything else? If a Celeron A 300MHz can match or outperform a PII 300MHz, why buy the more expensive product? By the time you read this the Celeron As should be on sale. Don't expect them to be as cheap as Celerons, but they should be cheaper than PII's. If you've been holding out for an upgrade, this is the CPU to get. And if you get the right motherboard, you can take advantage of 100MHz bus speeds and beyond. Definitely go looking for the rare boards that allow you to override the Intel settings, as all Celeron A's are bus and multiplier limited.



History of Pentiums and the L2 (Level 2) cache:

| Processor | Speed | Cache |
|-----------------|------------------|---|
| Pentium | 60MHz - 233MHz | 256k-512k on motherboard at bus frequency |
| Pentium Pro | 150MHz - 200MHz | 512k-1024k on separate die at CPU frequency |
| Pentium II | 233MHz - 450MHz+ | 512k on cartridge, at 1/2 CPU frequency |
| Pentium II Xeon | 400MHz+ | 512k-2048k on cartridge, at CPU frequency |
| Celeron | 266MHz - 333MHz | No cache |
| Celeron A | 300MHz+ | 128k on CPU die at CPU frequency |



HELLO FROM INDONESIA

Q My name is Bima from Indonesia. I've read your mag and I think it's one of the finest in the field. Too bad I haven't got the chance to subscribe yet. It's much too expensive now, due to the recent economy crisis in my country. Quite a shame, isn't it? Anyway, I do have some questions that have been nagging me for the last three days since I laid my hands on the Internet: how secure is it when we are doing a transaction, using a credit card via the Net? Even if we know there's a little security icon blinking on the edge of the screen, I am not totally convinced that other people won't be able to sneak up and steal my numbers. Furthermore, what is this 'cookie', anyway? How do I get my hands on the secure zone to do my transactions?

**Bima Sudiarto
Indonesia**

A It's pleasing to know the good word of PCPP spreads far and wide! Bima, online security is a hot topic and it's something that, currently, isn't 100% guaranteed. Your browser will use secure protocols automatically for sites that support it, you might see SHTTP instead of HTTP being used or one of the various levels of SSL (Secure Sockets Layer). You can rest assured that this is pretty safe - for someone to get at your information they'd need to intercept your packets and then decrypt them.

As for cookies, this has to be one of the most misunderstood Web technologies. I'll say this frankly for everyone: **THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH COOKIES.** For some reason many people get disturbed at the thought of information being written

to their drive by a Web site. Fear comes from lack of understanding, so here's an explanation of what a cookie is:

A cookie is a size-limited file that stores information about your browsing habits from a particular site. Note that one cookie exists for each site, and no other files on your drive can be read or written to except this one cookie file for the site you are visiting. Webmasters who use cookies do so to better your browsing experience - such as re-opening a page at the same location you last viewed it, or storing the contents of your shopping trolley when shopping online (allowing you to come back at a later date and not need to go looking for products again).

There is no security risk in using cookies, turning them off only denies you a better browsing experience and denies the Webmaster of a page the knowledge to help them structure their site better. No personal information or anything relating to you or your PC is stored, only information about how you use the site.

Tech Tips

Extra special bonus useful information

ONE AWESOME TIP

If you're a true geeky type you probably used to use XTreeGold and its rather useful built in viewer - handy for viewing any file type you selected, binary or ASCII. Windows tries hard to match file types to viewer, except for the fact that it doesn't associate a default viewer for file types it doesn't recognise. For example, it'll start Notepad if you click on a .TXT file, but won't start anything if you click on a READ.ME file, despite it also being a standard TXT file. Instead, Windows will prompt you with a list of known file types and ask you which one you want to view - pain in the butt when you're prompted by this every time you click on a file with an unrecognised extension. Sometimes you just want to see what's in a file without having to associate a viewer for it.

The solution? Force Windows to use a viewer for any file type it doesn't recognise:

- * Start Regedit
- * Open HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\Unknown\shell\openas\command.

- * Edit the (Default) setting and replace it with `c:\windows\notepad.exe %1`

This will start Notepad for any unrecognised file you click on. If you want to use Wordpad, or any other viewer (QuickView is a handy one, if you have it installed) just use that instead. Be sure to include the full path and filename, and you **MUST** follow it up with the %1 - this is a placement variable that represents the filename you clicked on, passed to the program by Windows.

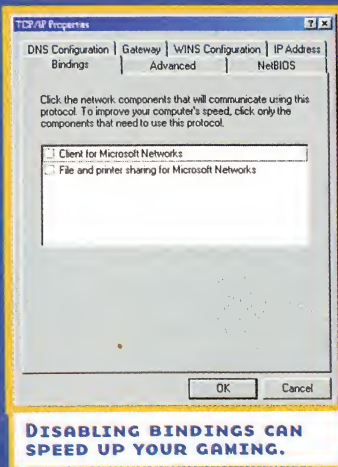
FASTER NETWORK GAMING

Most gamers setup networking for games and leave the settings on their default values. Sure, this works, but it's not the most efficient setup. In its default configuration, Windows will bind file and print sharing to all the protocols you add - what if you don't intend to share files?

Most gamers will have both TCP/IP and IPX installed - TCP/IP for the Internet and games that only use TCP/IP, and IPX for games that only use IPX. Bindings will be attached for both protocols, and will slow down your network.

To remove the bindings just click on Networking in the Control Panel and then click on the protocol you want to change. Select Properties and then the Bindings tab, and deselect 'Client for Microsoft Networks' and 'File and print sharing'.

Note, you won't be able to share files anymore, but if you want to have the best of both worlds make sure you have both TCP/IP and IPX installed, and just disable bindings for TCP/IP. This way your network will use IPX to share files (and play games for IPX games) and a faster TCP/IP for Internet and games. Most games coming out today focus on TCP/IP as a network transport anyway, so this is the preferred setup.



PC PowerPlay HOT HARDWARE

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A NEW DIMENSION FOR 3D

So many new cards, so many new promises. 3D enters a new phase of confusion.

Though a number of people keep commenting that the vast amount of 3D accelerator competition is a wonderful thing, I can't help but think that it's all an awful mess.

3D accelerators are becoming considerably more complex in terms of the technology they incorporate. This brings with it the problem that understanding a 3D card and its abilities can involve as much education as getting to know the rest of your PC.

Likewise, the focus that each 3D manufacturer is taking differs dramatically. Some are focussing on image quality, others speed, another still texture compression and higher resolutions. They're all furiously competing with one another, and even 3Dfx are a victim of their own product.

To explain my last statement, the 3Dfx Banshee is to the Voodoo 2 what the Rush was to the Voodoo 1. Again 3Dfx have released a 2D/3D combo card that is inferior to their 3D standalone solution. Although I'll cover it in more detail, essentially the Banshee only has one texel unit where the Voodoo 2 has 2. This means that where the Voodoo 2 handles multi-pass texturing perfectly, it's a big no no on the Banshee. It's obviously harder to make a 2D/3D card then it is a 3D only one.

We're going to take a look at all the just-released and coming-soon range of 2nd generation 3D accelerators.

One of the first things to consider with the new generation of cards is that the majority of them are AGP solutions. Now, we've gone over processor limitations numerous times here in Tech News. But essentially, if you have an aversion to upgrading your CPU, the only feasible PCI 2nd gen solution so far is the Voodoo 2.

The RIVA TNT

Named after its ability to render 2 pixels per clock (Twin Texel (TNT)) this is the board that could really upset the 3Dfx stranglehold, or so we're lead to believe. Realistically, is anyone prepared to sacrifice Glide (3Dfx native drivers which gain more developer support everyday) for better image quality? Of course, being a 2D/3D combo card it can be used in tandem with the Voodoo 2, but these kind of solutions are becoming quite expensive.

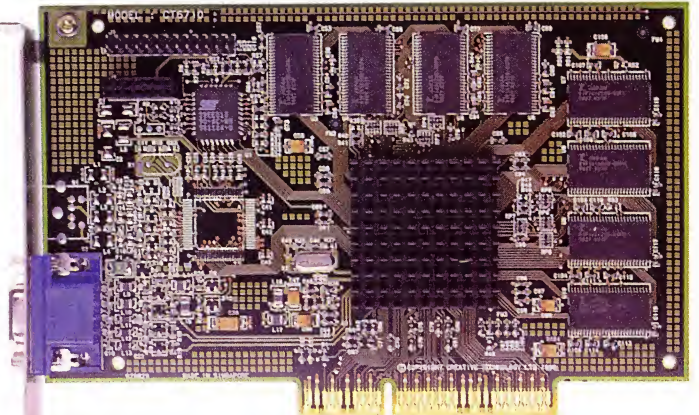
Technically though, the TNT is actually quite exciting. Besides its twin texel units (similar to the Voodoo 2), it also offers 3.2GB/sec memory bandwidth using 200MHz memory (twice the speed of P2 memory).

In terms of features, the TNT has reason to be boastful. It offers full screen anti-aliasing (a much-touted Power VR 2NG feature), support for up to 1600x1200 resolution, and 2X AGP implementation.

Image quality is one of the biggest selling points that Riva are focussing heavily on.

Hype alert:

"The ability of developers to access all the options in both DirectX and on the TNT chip is a significant move forward to making it possible for developers to exploit both the API and the chip. NVIDIA intends to have a suite of tools for profiling and optimizing the use of this chip. These tools will provide support for the use of special effects and multi-texturing. Leveraging the performance of the chip, NVIDIA is seeking to enable developers to approach the realism seen in Myst but in real time." This is taken directly from nVidia's TNT press release. If it holds true, it could indeed be a revolutionary card.



I'm TNT, I'm dy-no-mite, TNT, watch me explode!

Learning from their mistakes with the Riva 128, which although quick, had the worst colour-out of all the other 3D accelerators, the TNT is said to be breathtaking in terms of image quality.

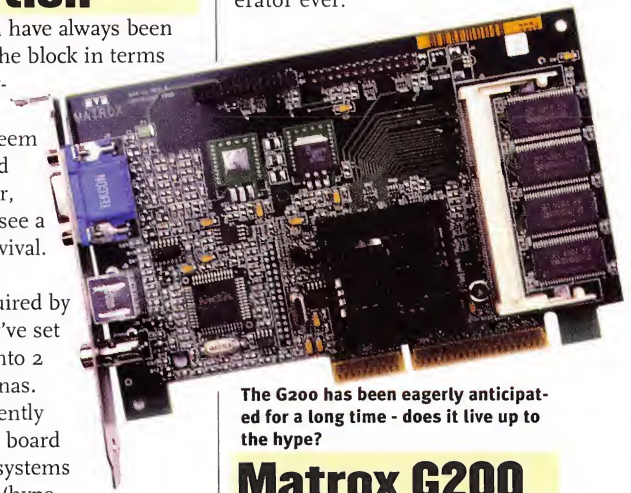
Rendition

Rendition have always been the first off the block in terms of 3D accelerators, but still always seem to finish dead last. However, we may still see a Rendition revival. Having been recently acquired by Micron, they've set their focus into 2 different arenas. They're currently developing a board for low-end systems and another (hype alert) that they claim will be better than anything on the market at the moment.

The Conspiracy project (low end) uses the current V2200 chipset but adds a geometry processor from Fujitsu (the same one we mentioned earlier in Graphics Tech). The geometry processor means that those who can't afford or don't want a

processor upgrade could receive quite a powerful 3D polygonal performance increase from just the one card.

The V3300 is Rendition's big gun. Although real information is not available, Rendition want you to believe that it will be the most powerful 3D accelerator ever.

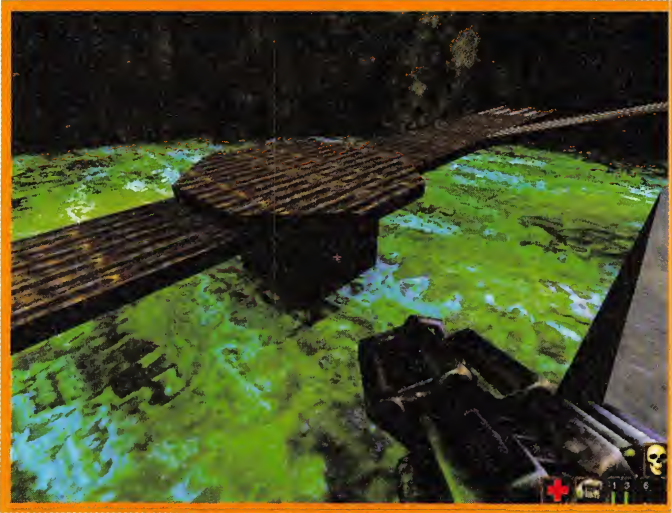


The G200 has been eagerly anticipated for a long time - does it live up to the hype?

Matrox G200

Matrox failed dismally in their first 3D attempt; the Mystique, and they've put some time between it and their next 3D offering; the G200. Hopefully their patience will pay off in a card that performs particularly well.

Technically, the G200 brings some new technology to 3D accelerators. A dual 64bit bus (which



has been heralded as far more powerful than the traditional 128bit bus) has been introduced.

Image quality for the G200 should be of a particularly high standard as it offers full screen anti-aliasing, per-pixel trilinear filtering, and another new feature called Symmetric Rendering Architecture. SRA is particularly useful in that it makes excellent use of AGP 2X. It uniquely and correctly integrates local and system memory for textures.

S3 Savage 3D

S3, like Matrox, also got their 3D wrong in the first generation of cards, and now want to make up for the mistakes with a more powerful card. The Savage S3 is most definitely a contender but brings some controversy to the world of 3D.

In terms of new technology, the Savage offers a dual pipeline for handling separate functions. This is quite powerful because it allows one pipeline to handle rendering, the other texture processing. This translates to a quite impressive ability for the Savage to be able to do trilinear filtering in one cycle.

The most controversial of the Savage's functions though, is its ability for hardware texture compression. Texture compression has already been written into DirectX 6, so like it or not, it's bound to be a function we're going to see more of in 3D accelerators. The controversy is around whether or not in an actual running sense, the compression is lossy. That's to say, is there a discernible lack of quality in a Savage compressed scene versus the same scene on a card with no compression.

To this there is, as yet, no answer. S3's documentation and tests imply that no loss is perceivable, and indeed, the Unreal

S3 screenshots would seem to imply that this is the case. However, other independent tests have implied that there is noticeable degradation.

That should have been the end of it, but the test carried out was done using old superseded DirectX 6 routines which according to S3 have been updated, improved and accepted by Microsoft already. Sigh, these kind of arguments could continue forever, we'll only know for sure with a thorough examination of the final product.

Texture compression may not be all that bad though. Playing a game such as Quake where the action is fast and constant (as in many first person action games) it's unlikely any kind of loss would be noticed. Besides, is a small amount of loss too high a price to pay for double the number of textures in a game.

Graphically, the Savage offers 32-bit colour rendering (with a 24-bit Z-buffer), and from all reports visually compares to the G200.

After the S3 ViRGE 3D decelerator S3 have a lot of lost ground to regain which they might just do with the Savage. There's already quite a fan base for this as yet unreleased card.

PowerVR "Second Generation"

I've always been a fan of the PowerVR range; the approach it takes to 3D with real light sources, shadowing and a more luscious colour palette is highly commendable. The original series had its failing though, failings that will be corrected in the 2NG.

The most interesting factor of the 2NG is its diversity, there are already at least five or more planned versions of the technolo-

SPECULAR SPOTLIGHT

This week in the Specular Spotlight we're going to take a look at 2 new 3D platform games from Ubi Soft, the first being Rayman 2. Those who remember the original Rayman will remember it for its beautiful colours, cute characters and smooth scrolling environment. Well, as you can see from the Screenshots, Rayman 2 looks to be all that Rayman was, but in absolutely glorious 3D, right down to the hands without limbs.

The next Ubi Soft platformer to come is named Tonic. Tonic is an interesting 3D platformer that oozes that certain Ubi style. Read: trippy and way too drugged out. Actually, snippets of Tonic we've seen have shown stunning visuals and excellent use of 3D. There's also a rather varied game thrown in as well. You toboggan down ice filled pipes plus other surprises besides just jumping around the 3D platformed world.





These shots show Unreal running on S3's Savage. Notch one up for S3.

gy, including arcade, console and PC variants. Of course, one of these is the controversial Sega Dreamcast. Not only did NEC beat 3Dfx to the console chipset punch, but murmuring on the Internet implied that NEC's focus has abandoned the PC card until the Dreamcast is complete.

Firstly, according to NEC/Videologic, that is entirely untrue. There are two teams at work within the labs; one specifically for the PC, another for the console. Of course, the console aspect could be very profitable for the PC gamer. If NEC revamp Power SGL for the second generation card, we might actually see PC ports of Dreamcast games quickly and with ease for the development team.

As NEC are also planning an arcade version of the chipset, even arcade ports could be handled relatively easy. Especially if Power SGL allows for processor scalability so that the slower the processor, the less polygons it uses to create the object. This is one of the much touted features of Shiny's Messiah engine which could form its own revolution within the 3D industry.

Technically and visually, the

PowerVR 2NG is quite exciting. The card boasts a fill rate of 80 million pixels/second on a Pentium 200. Other nice hardware additions include high resolutions up to 1600 x 1200, true hardware bump mapping, enhanced mip mapping and anisotropic texture filtering which is particularly exciting and a requirement of Talisman.

3Dfx Banshee

The Banshee may not have the same compatibility problems the Rush did, but the design differences of the Banshee make it a very different animal to the Voodoo 2.

This isn't intended to be a total Banshee slam, but in reality, as an AGP card it just doesn't live up to the other 2nd generation 3D solutions being offered. In some ways, it doesn't even live up to the Voodoo 2. Interesting enough, 3Dfx take the stance that the Banshee was intended to compliment rather than supersede the Voodoo 2. They admitted the ultimate PC would have a Banshee plus 2 Voodoo 2's in SLI mode. Banshee, then, in 3Dfx's own

eyes is intended more as a 2D solution than it is a 3D.

The Banshee is compatible with the Voodoo 2 with one particular key difference that has caused all the ruckus. The Banshee only boasts one texture processor where the Voodoo 2 has two. Essentially a Voodoo 2 uses both texture units in parallel as opposed to Banshee's one texel unit sequential approach. Thus, the Voodoo 2 is faster with games that support multi-texturing in a single pass.

To make up for this shortfall, 3Dfx have upped the clock speed of the Banshee. Where a Voodoo 2 runs at 100Mhz, a Banshee runs at 125Mhz. This hardware increase in the short term will primarily see a speed increase in Direct X games where more advanced Voodoo 2 features are not enabled. This won't last though.

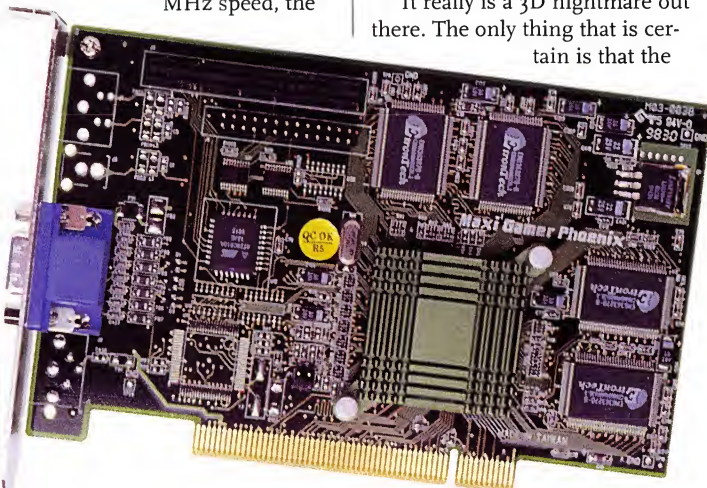
One of DirectX 6's key functions is bump mapping, a desirable form of texturing that will enhance the graphical appeal of games. Bump mapping however is a procedure that greatly favours single pass multi texturing (how the Voodoo 2 does it). Even with an extra 25% of pure MHz speed, the

Banshee will perform anywhere up to 25% slower than a Voodoo 2. In Direct X games that don't use any form of single pass multi texturing though, the Banshee will have a higher fill rate than a Voodoo 2. That's not the only gripe to be had with the Banshee either. It's AGP support is quite minimal. All it does is sit there using the extra bandwidth but without the clever stuff like sideband addressing that comes with full AGP 2x designs. Not being AGP 2x compliant, it also does not share system memory for additional textures.

3Dfx Rampage

News is just in that 3Dfx are planning to never make another 3D-only card. The Voodoo 3 has been reported to make use of a .25 micron process in place of the .35 micron process of the Voodoo 2. 3Dfx executives hinted that full screen anti-aliasing would be part of the feature set, but would not say much else. This Voodoo "3" will show its face to the world as the Voodoo Rampage, with no set release date as yet. As we learn of new features, we'll be sure to report on it here.

It really is a 3D nightmare out there. The only thing that is certain is that the



Voodoo 2 continues to gain ground and with the advent of Glide 3.0 (this month) native development is becoming more and more popular. It's still 3Dfx's market out there, as for the other accelerators, well, only time will tell.

QUICK BYTES

Cheating sucks

Beware Quake 2 and Internet multiplayer participants. Metabyte have just released new Wicked3D drivers that features an 'x-ray' mode. This allows you to see through walls, giving a Metabyte owner a rather unfair advantage. (You can see the enemy coming before he can see you.)

X Wing Alliance

Players have been begging for this for a long time. Finally Lucasarts are releasing a

Privateer type game in the Star Wars universe. You'll be given the opportunity to go 'Solo' and fly a Corellian Transport (Millennium Falcon) around the Star Wars galaxy.

Well, that'd be too perfect. Actually, you don't have total freedom, instead there will be scripted missions that follow a particular story line that eventually takes you inside a 3D Death Star II. For no other reason except that you get a chance to fly the Falcon, XWA should rock.

X-Com Alliance

Microprose are now the latest company to utilise the Unreal engine. It's official, the Quake 2 engine is indeed very dead. Microprose plan to use the Unreal engine for their latest X-Com offering, X-Com Alliance.

X-Com Alliance will put you into one of the numerous 3D worlds allowing you to control 4 different units, all in first-person, and under one very advanced map and view system. On the top of the screen, the interface provides separate



(above) X-Wing Alliance
(left) X-Com Alliance



Innovate interface, Unreal engine, this could definitely be a winner.

Next month

We have some new info on the

Permedia 3 and the 2nd generation ATI Rage.

mini-screens for each unit which will look great and chew up some serious CPU power.

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Net Game News

Cybergaming Monthly by March Stepnik

Unreal News

The second coming is nigh! After a few months of an unnatural lull (enough time for players to get through the single player experience), Unreal is about to make another huge impact in the world of gaming, this time in multiplayer. With an excellent user support (<http://unreal.epicgames.com/>), players are now coming up with their own mods and TC's for Unreal. Real CTF (<http://www.planetunreal.com/realCTF/>) was one of the first Unreal mods off the block and is looking very tasty indeed. Another is the currently unnamed NonameCTF. Go to <http://www.captured.com/nonamectf/> for more details.

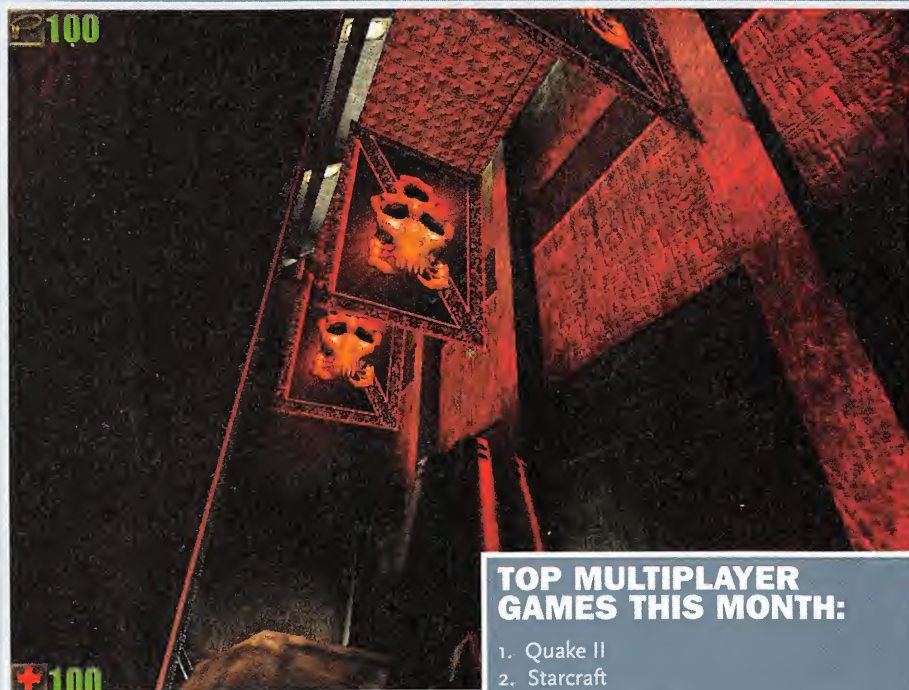
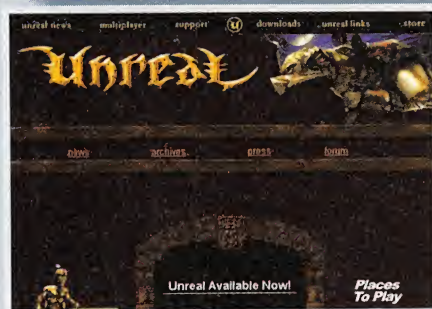
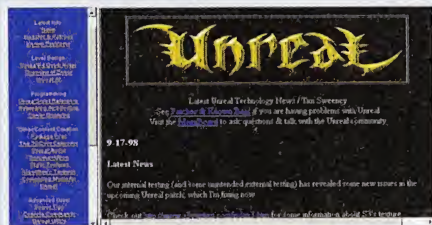
A new monster sized patch will be available soon for Unreal, which will apparently do wonders in optimising Unreal for internet and online play. At this stage, most of the improvement will come as a result of tweaking some of the game code. Epic have admitted though that further enhancement is needed, so as far as this being the patch to fix all the problems with multiplayer Unreal - unfortunately it is not. We'll have to keep our eye out for future developments on the Unreal patch/multiplayer saga.

ActivLink

Activision's ActivLink still hasn't made it onto the online gaming scene, at least - not in Australia. We wait patiently...

New and maybe exciting

A group of people not so patient are those behind a new (unnamed) online system currently in development, and they're based in Australia! It's in early stages yet, so not much info is currently available. The idea behind it is to have an online gaming network that is completely centralised, and which runs in the background of your operating system. It's looking very promising, so keep your eyes on this space next issue for more news on this one.



We do look forward to the day when The Great Unreal Patch comes to save us all from bot-matching. The shots above come from the Real CTF capture-the-flag mod out real soon

Anti-lag

Still, at the moment, your best chance at headache-free online gaming is going to be with the two major carriers. The two primary things gamers want went jumping online are good ping times and plenty of people to play with or against. The real quagmire for the OGP's (online gaming providers)

TOP MULTIPLAYER GAMES THIS MONTH:

1. Quake II
2. Starcraft
3. Age of Empires
4. Dark Reign
5. Myth

And the votes are in! It seems most people are playing StarCraft and Quake 2 again. This month we got votes for older games, like Dark Reign and Age of Empires. It's great to see that older games are still getting played by the masses.

To nominate your favourite multiplayer game, simply email us at ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au, with the subject line "favourite multiplayer game nomination". Till next month!



Nnnnine! Nnnnnineninenine! Nnine nine nine nnnnnine! (Motocross Madness coming soon on Wireplay)

though, is satisfying both of these aspects at once. Definitely, at times, the OGP's may seem like graveyards. So players instead brave the lag-ridden lands of the WWW in search for unparalleled online experiences, with the added bonus of literally having a whole world of opponents to choose from. From this you get comments like "multiplayer sucks 'cause the lag is unbearable and I keep getting disconnected from the server," and players giving up. Meanwhile, those using the lag-crushing providers (at the right times of the day), are flying through beautiful gaming experiences, albeit with a smaller gaming community.

The lesson learned from players (and many LAN'ers) is that lag comes before quality of players. You can be pitted up against some terrific opponents, but if the lag's unbearable - you don't have a game. With OGP's, the ping times are excellent. Occasionally you'll find you're playing some annoying people, and now and then you may have trouble finding opponents suited to your style and competency level. The only way to counter this, is to encourage more people to use OGP's!

COMMERCIAL SERVERS

Wireplay

(<http://www.wireplay.com.au>)

Wireplay Warp is the new service dedicated to those with access to Telstra's Big Pond. The result - multiplayer games with lag around the 30ms mark. Talk about a droolathon. At this stage only Quake and Quake 2 are supported, but in the very near future all Wireplay supported games will be playable on Wireplay Warp. Go to <http://www.wireplay.com.au/warp/main.shtml> now!

Wireplay have got their finger on the pulse. Perhaps the strongest group of people within the online gaming community are those that form clans and guilds. Intense, gruelling battles are not uncommon between these clans. Wireplay have just announced a new Clan and Team only GX Mod server for exclusive use by registered clans and teams, which is password protected. The idea behind this was to have an official arena to hold mammoth clan battles which would be

HOTTEST TC/MOD OF THE MONTH

NGN keeps evolving and this issue we're happy to introduce a section devoted entirely to the most exciting and/or hotly anticipated modification or total conversion of the month.

Alien Annihilation

Developer/s: Slaughter Development Team

Game engine: Quake II

Available: 4th quarter '98

WWW: <http://www.converted2.com/aatc/>



This is a HUGE total conversion. Rather than just going the multiplayer tweak, AA is also a mammoth single player Quake II overhaul. The aim behind this one is to bring the Aliens movie experience to first person gaming, although it should be mentioned that AA has nothing to do with the Alien license held by Fox. The head of the SDT, Glorfindel, found playing Quake II was too much like the Rambo experience - running around and blasting everything in sight. So with AA, the player will be the hunted rather than hunter. Enemy skins closely resemble the Alien Xenomorphs, and they'll apparently behave more like bots and cover large areas of the level in patrol rather than being bound to a small area. NPC humans will also play a role - either helping you or getting in your way. Ten levels are planned, each being huge and taking you through a well thought out story line. Alien Annihilation looks like it may succeed in providing a refreshingly different Quake II experience.



On the multiplayer side of things, AA features a team fortress style structure. You can play as either the aliens or the humans. The ultimate aim is to totally destroy the opposition.

In the all-alien multiplayer fest, the secondary aim is to protect your queen. The queen will respawn your character when killed. However, if your queen is captured or destroyed, she will no longer be able to do so. Instead, you'll be regenerated as a member of the opposite team!

Player classes play a vital role in diversifying the gameplay. So far there are eight classes listed, with more on the way. Each will have their own advantages and disadvantages true to the Aliens theme. For example, there will be a scientist that will research new weapons and power-ups for use as the game unfolds. Protection of these will be vital.

New weapons are also featured, with perhaps the most hotly anticipated weapon award going to the flame thrower, a la Aliens. Another hot sounding weapon is the Sentry Gun, which can be programmed to automatically open fire on anything in its field of view.

There you have it. Alien Annihilation sounds, on paper, absolutely fantastic. If the SDT can pull it off, it could go down as the greatest TC seen in history. Prepare to freak out.

free from annoying interruptions.

As of mid-September, Wireplay have updated their Quake World servers to version 2.30. Apart from being more stable and fixing some bugs, v.2.30 has stacks of new features.

Wireplay have also announced that they're testing both Motocross Madness and Ancient Conquest for support on their servers. The list of supported games is always growing, so go to <http://www.wireplay.com.au/games.shtml> to find out more.

Multiplay

(<http://www.multiplay.com.au>)

Multiplay have set up the Multiplay TEN Quake 2 CTF Fun Competition. Apart from being a bit of a mouthful, this competition is perfect for players who are having a hard time trying to find players that are into CTF, or finding games that accommodate clan-less players or those without much experience in the game. Go to <http://www.multiplay.com.au/ross/ctfcomp.htm> for more details.

WEBSTALK

So many sites, so little time. Here's Webstalk for the fine month of November.

SITE OF THE MONTH

TOP 100 WEB DEVELOPMENT

<http://www.TOP100.net/home.shtml>

If you have a website that needs sprucing up, go to this site without hesitation. It is chock-full of animations, neat Javascripts and just about anything else you could want to make an aesthetically pleasing cyberspace. The best part is, they're all obligation free. The only thing the makers want in return is a link to their site, which most people could make in about two seconds.

The site is very nicely presented and quite user friendly. In the animation chooser you can actually change its background to match your site so you can see what each one will look like. It may not sound like much, but it's little things like that which lift some sites above others, this one included.

Content: ★★★★★

Site Design: ★★★★★



about your 3D accelerator, and the games that run on it. Also included are loads of drivers and upgrades, so if your games aren't running as well as they should you should probably head over to this site and see what the latest patches are. Essential for Voodoo owners.

Content:

★★★★★

Site Design:

★★★★★

BLUE GRAPE:

<http://www.blue-grape.com>

Another site where you can buy over the net. This time though it's for slightly less fragile items such as T-Shirts and Caps. At the time of writing

the site only featured North American orders, but promises that orders from other territories including Australia will be available in the very near future. The sorts of things on offer are mainly band and movie T-Shirts. The best (or worst) part is you're very unlikely to find many of them at all in shops so if you want one you're probably going to have to mail

order anyway, so why not do it over the net. The only thing wrong with this site is that the "blown up" pictures are only a tiny bit bigger than the originals.

Content: ★★★★★

Site Design: ★★★★★

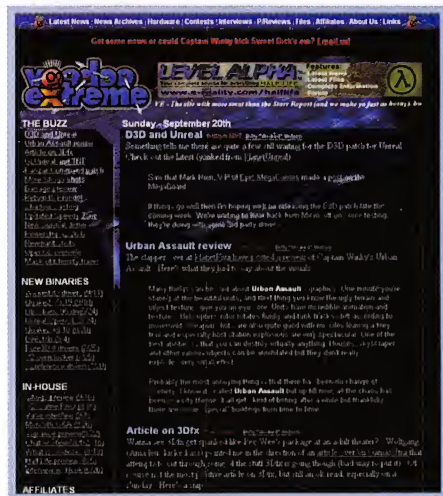
TOM'S HARDWARE PAGE

www.tomshardware.com

If you want to know the real deal on everything that is new and exciting in hardware land this is the place to be. Tom cuts right to the chase in his detailed reviews and product release information. The site is well designed and always up to date with the newest of the new. If you want to decide which silicon wafer of gaming joy you should slot into your beast next, Tom's is the first place to look.

Content: ★★★★★

Site Design: ★★★★★



VOODOO EXTREME

<http://www.voodooextreme.com>

We took a look at Rivazone a couple of months back, and now it's time for those many people with a Voodoo or Voodoo 2 based board. Voodoo Extreme is the place to go for everything you could want to know



ANAND TECH

www.anandtech.com

Though Tom (of Tom's Hardware guide) was the first to get a major games hardware and overclocking site up and running, Anand has since come along and, in the eyes of many, bettered Tom's efforts. The page is constantly updated with the latest hardware information; there's news, guides, and explanations, all well written and nicely designed. A 'must bookmark' site for anyone interested in the technical side of things.

Content: ★★★★★

Site Design: ★★★★★

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LETTERS

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The Ultima Lawsuit

A lot of people have been complaining bitterly about Ultima Online, basically since it came out. True, I'd be pissed off if I had forked over the cash only to be subjected to PKillers and crashes, but I think that Origin's attempt was important. I think that the law suit against Ultima Online is both a good and a bad thing. Bad because it will discourage further projects of this magnitude, and also punish Origin for what is a vital experiment. Good because when finally someone tries to make something similar they will make damn sure that it works in fear of a similar fate.

All said and done I am undecided about whether Origin should win or lose. If they lose it will be a staunch punishment for the company who was only trying to bring the world a new and unique experience, albeit at a cost, while if they win then the many consumers will be out of pocket, and probably less willing to try the "Next Big Thing". A game like this should be set up as an experiment, with no real costs, in order to promote the development of good online games, so that any problems are expected by the users. Regrettably though, I am not a hippie and neither is the average publishing executive. Money is what moves the world. Origin had no choice to charge money for Ultima Online. It cost obscene amounts of money to set up, and heaps to run also. I've no doubt that they plan to make some money on this but this is completely reasonable and no-one would resent them had it worked well.

Perhaps Origin should lose the law suit to the value of any actual profit made on Ultima Online (If any at this point). Ultima Online is a critically important event in online gaming, and it is regrettable that this debacle will set back further attempts at such games. The mistakes made by Origin and the successes they've had should be learnt from, to develop a nice, clean cut, and over all functional game. For the good of the community and the world.. Someone had

to do an "Ultima Online", and I am glad that it was Origin, and not some genuinely shonky company.

Beast Jstbeast
Internet

Games for the rest of us

I was totally shocked to read in last month's PCPP (Issue #27) that id Software's next game will be almost entirely multiplayer! I live in a small, fairly remote town in the Kimberley's in W.A. where the internet is a lot more expensive than in the city, so being 15 without a full-time (or even well-paying) job I can't afford to play on the net and there is no local-call multiplayer service. I like playing deathmatch as much as anyone else, on the occasions when I have been on a low-ping net server. It sure is a gamble, as id say. Sure there are lots more game players in the cities, but this still doesn't mean that they only want to play multiplayer! Quake and Quake II are about the only games I actually own, all the others are just demos etc from your cover CD.

Another thing I'm really pissed about, is that Quake Arena requires 3D acceleration. As I said before, I don't have much of a job (I'm not going to explain it) and no-one else in this town has one that I know! In fact I doubt anyone else has Quake 2! So, if we suddenly moved to Perth, or Darwin or whatever, and I got a good job, got cheap Internet access and bought a 3D accelerator, I might be happy and buy Quake Arena. I'm just a bit disappointed that there isn't much single-play. What is going on?!

If I ever got to see what a 3D accelerated game of Quake 2 (or Unreal) looked like, I'm sure I would love it. But what happened to an immersive, atmospheric storyline where you could really feel good to blow away those stinkin' aliens? Blowing away friends or even anonymous net players can be fun for a while but being the same thing it just goes on and on with not much sense of accomplishment (unless you get on a ranked multiplayer service and you rise in the ranks to fight harder real opponents).

Joel Byrnes
Kununurra WA

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Singalong with Rhys

I recently had the thought there were scant few poems concerning the essence of what it means to be a gamer. And so, seeing this rather large hole in the market, I wrote one.

(The more astute of you may see that it is modelled on the tune "The Model of a Modern Major General" from the musical "Pirates of Penzance"). Anyway, I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Rhys Allen
a.k.a "Jabberwock"

THE MODEL OF A GAMER

I am the very model of a computer games devotional,
neglecting all reality both practical/emotional.
I bought a chair which lets me sit for hours ergonomically,
and the price of games these days is all I know of the economy.

I've spent weeks on end solving each and every Zorkish mystery,
or recreating every single bloody battle fought through history.
My girlfriend's getting irky because she thinks I stood her up again,
even though I have explained that I was trapped within a dragon's den.

I only go to work because I know I have to live...
I am the very model of a computer game obsessive.

I've sat in bars for hours pumping silver into Asteroids,
not caring 'bout the money nor the headaches nor the haemorrhoids.
I've commanded mighty hoards of Orcs in lengthy games of strategy,
while I'm feasting on the pizza, beer and coffee that's in front of me.

I've butchered German soldiers in a castle known as Wolfenstein,
I've needed speed and got it, racing round the track in record time.
I've hunted raging dinosaurs with nothing but a knife to wield,
and slayed the Lord Diablo with just a rusty sword and a shield.

In short from matters Doom to Quake and every single RTS,
I play with the very model of computer game finesse.

Now if my mind was canny to everything programmable,
from C++ to Java Script to Pascal and HTML.
And if I understood the meaning of a code written in binary,
or the difference that exists between the many types of memory,
and if I spent my time at school instead of at the gaming parlour,
if I listen to my tutors, pay attention to my father,
if I spent the time I've spent in Duke practicing to code right,
in short if I would learn instead of blasting ev-er-y last sprite,
then with a keen imagination and a slice of inspiration,
I might produce the very model of a computer game creation.

*Thanks Rhys, you're a freak and we love you. Your prose now
graces a previously unclaimed square foot of wall and we all read it
and nod knowingly on a daily basis.*

A charitable attitude

As I start to write this letter I am pretty damn annoyed with people who play Quake 2 online. Now don't get me wrong, I love Quake 2 (in a game sort of way...) and spend most of my time playing it online. And most fellow Quakers are not included in what I am about to describe. But there is

always one...no I am not talking about campers (that does annoy me too) but about people who just go off about lag all the time. Let's call them moaners, I mean after all that's what they are doing when it comes down to it, moaning! OK, a Quake 2 server isn't without its lag and granted it can sometimes get annoying but that doesn't justify why some pathetic "moaner" has

to bind a key to "F%#K THIS LAG" and press it 20 times when someone kills him. All the god damned 'moaner' is trying to do is to make himself look less stupid when the most amateur player manages to kill him with a friggin' blaster! Face it pal, you suck!

Now some of you may find what I am saying a little harsh. Well that's too bad and it's probably cause you are one of these 'Moaners', or you just have never encountered one before. Many Quakers would know what I am talking about. Well, I believe we should banish these "Moaners" out of our wonderful Quake society the same as campers. If they don't like the lag (which, by the way, isn't prohibiting anyone from fragging his ass) then they should piss off.

Capt' Yahoo

Campbelltown, S.A.

Campers and Lag-Moaners, you have been told!

PK'ers - let them live. Then kill 'em!

PK's should be allowed to exist, because that's what happens in the real world. But in the real world, we have PC Plod punishing these people if they get caught. The same should happen in Ultima Online etc. - i.e. if you get caught, you can get hung, drawn and quartered, sent to jail, all your things confiscated, and so on. Just an idea though.

Tim The Great
Internet

All hail the games programmers

As I sat down to enjoy a wonderful session of Unreal I can't help but feel that we should be a little more generous with game writers and stop to applaud their efforts. Let's make a comparison of a game to um... Windows, for example. Now I am not going to join the popular pastime of ragging on Windows. However I would like to point out that Bill Gates and his multi-billion dollar corporation worked for 3 years on Windows '95 to generate Windows '98 (Some would suggest that Windows '98 is simply Windows '95 release D). My point is after all of the collaborative effort of some of the finest programmers in the industry they still couldn't get it right.

Windows '98 is a good system, yet it still has glaring faults. How

difficult then, must it be for game writers. They have to come up with a new, simple, intuitive interface that's different from anything before. They have to work with cutting edge hardware to create the most sophisticated visual and sound environments. They have to attempt to mimic the incredibly complex human brain, with time restrictions and with less manpower and significantly less financial backing than Microsoft's. So next time I hear of a game slipping I'll bite my tongue and try to wait patiently...

David
Internet

The C64 Forever

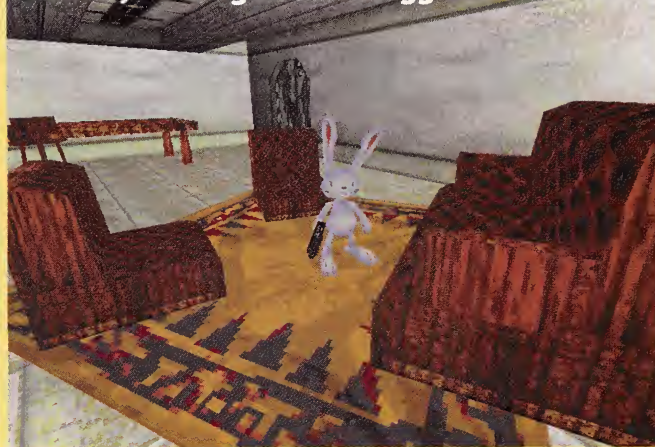
I must say I totally agree with Cadfael (Brotherly Love, PCPP#28). I have been a game fanatic since I first got my pong machine back in the early '80's. Since then I have been through the Atari 2600 crash, the Commodore 64 era (If you don't remember the likes of Boulderdash, Paratroid, Thing on a Spring, Elite and so forth, you could never truly appreciate the heart of videogames) and the rise of Nintendo, Sega and Sony.

Although I still have a great passion for videogames I feel that there is something missing from today's games. Although we have great advancements in graphics, sound and hardware, I find that the most important factors, the originality and gameplay are lacking. Now to the younger audience, they may say this is crap and rattle off all these great fighting, driving and platform games - and yes, to them they may be original and great, but to me they are just rehashes of old games that although they have refined the play mechanics down to near perfection in some cases, just aren't varied enough from the original to hold my attention for long. Besides that, why is it that developers seem to think that a game has to be of a certain genre to be any good.

Boulderdash and Paratroid were classic games yet how would you define them? Call me a nostalgic fool but I would love a return to the days of the C64 when artists weren't afraid to experiment with new ideas to keep us entertained. It's what this industry needs, a good kick up the ass to stop it from going stale.

Brad Taylor
Internet

Letter: Jedi Knight Easter Egg



Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2 EASTER EGG

Whilst roaming around in the outskirts of Barons Hed searching for some secrets, I heard a door open, followed by a door closing. I restarted the level (level five), used god mode and fly mode, and absolutely hammered it over the river thingy to where the buildings full of innocent civilians are. I landed at the beginning of the bridge and, facing the bridge, turned left and noticed a locked door. Hoping I would be quick enough, I started back tracking (the normal way) until I heard the door opening. I quickly rushed inside the door and found the bunny from Sam & Max. I have sent an 800x600 screenshot just to prove I'm not bluffing and I was kinda hoping you could print the picture in your (kick-ass) magazine for all to see. Also, on level nine, the fuel station launch level, when you jump on the ship at the very end of the level, before you land, try to face as far round the other way as you can and when the bridge is pulling in, there are three pictures of the bunny's face. That's all, thanks.

P.S. The bunny has a Bryar pistol, but he doesn't attack. He doesn't die either.

Jak.

Money vs Integrity

I am sick of game companies rushing to get the latest game out for a big spending time, for example Christmas. Often the games that come out at these times are half finished, and I find it a waste of what could otherwise have become a great game. I know of many such games, but one that breaks the exception (wasn't really rushed and is a great game) but seems to be lacking in my opinion, is AFL 98.

I know that you may think that I

am crazy saying this (seeing as you gave it 94%) but I think that many aspects of the game could have been improved. In your review you make a note that the 50 metre line isn't included but that it will be incorporated in the full version, in my version of the game there is no 50 metre line! I can think of many games that have been rushed/haven't really been rushed but could have been so much more. Game companies just don't get it.

We gamers don't want a half finished game that has potential - we want a game to be released when, and only when, the programmers are fully satisfied that they have made the game to the best of their ability and that they are fully finished with it. NO MORE RUSHING IT OUT FOR CHRISTMAS! Unreal - a perfect example of what can happen when the designers wait until they are ready to release it. And what did it get? 98% and a tag saying "Best game ever".

JIMI
Internet

Jimi, you are so right. Couple of things though; AFL 98 is a great game, but there are a number of features we were told that would be included in the final version which weren't, like 50m lines and different crowd chants for each club. And even Unreal, the 'Best Game Ever' isn't perfect - internet multiplayer is woefully pathetic, and the developers are working on fixes as we speak.

Long live the Quake girls!

I think it is great that your mag does not immediately assume that all its readers are 10 year old boys, with the wide range of topics, game types and software/hardware that you guys cover, but I was just wondering if you would ever consider doing an article on the still novel topic of girl gamers. Although we are few and far between, (I have become used to



the fact that I am always the only female at our LAN Quake/TF bash every month), I think it would be great to give us a bit more publicity and show that yes, we too can sit for hours straight and battle pipebomb traps, Zergling/tank rushes and nasty Arch Viles in between working and looking after a baby too! It would just be a nice change for fellow Quakers to treat us with a bit more respect instead of logging on to DM or TF and having people either immediately assume that you are some kind of pervert or cross dresser as one guy asked me, or ask for your phone number because he is in love as his girlfriend hates it when he logs on for hours, or ask you every five minutes if you really are a girl because you can actually play better than they can!! There you go! That's my 2 cents.

Major Mistress
Internet

Ode to, erm, us.

I have just read some startling news. It be the kind of news that (like a surrounding environment penetrating a groggy, zombie-like sensation after peeling ones buttocks from a slickly vinyl covered desk chair, having just burst through an eludingly unattainable threshold of sustained PC gaming pleasure) finds difficulty in forming a rational state of comprehension within the mind...

But upon reflection I think...

It feels right.

It is right.

It feels good.

It feels like justice has been served...

It's feels like..

PC POWERPLAY HAVE JUSTLY, NOBLY, HUMBLY and RIGHT-EOUSLY BEEN AWARDED WITH...

MAGAZINE

OF THE YEAR!!!

To my Honourable fellows, I beg thee, have mercy on my fee-

ble soul. Thou art Demigods of gaming glory. Thine keystrokes, with every word, every letter, burst with the fantastic light of wondrous knowledge. Shrines and Temples are being constructed as I scribe. Stray animals and the priceless "Holy Pizza from YesterWeek" are being readied for sacrifice.

Even the Makers of Games are quivering at your speech, and cowering meekly in your shadows. Rightly so!! May they not, nor anyone, perchance they be Peasant Player or Knighted Gamespawn, know PC PowerPlay's true Power!! So I bow down to thee, and offer my mind in right belief that you will further fill it with gaming goodies.

Humbly,
Cam Elkins
Internet

Hey, thanks Cam. Twas truly nice to have been awarded the honour. Honestly, we were amazed because all we wanted to do was make a mag about stuff we thought was good, i.e. games and all the paraphernalia that surrounds the gaming life. Awards from industry bodies are all well and good, but it don't mean squat to us if the people we make the mag for don't enjoy reading it. That's what really matters to us.

Just say no

I'd like to have a little gripe about an unfortunate thing that happened while playing Starcraft (bloody good game, BTW) on Battle.net the other night. I was playing a team game with two teams of two, when less than a minute into the game my "trusted" team-mate tells me that he is in fact drunk, and only playing for kicks until he passes out. "Oh well...", I think, "At least they (the enemy) wont know that. I can bluff my way to a win, while they waste time eradicating the boozy threat."

But this thought died before I

could even taunt my opponents into something stupid, because I realised that my comrade had in fact told EVERYONE that he was off his nut. So six minutes later a combined enemy force swarms into Drunky's half built, barely defended base, resulting in his immediate and unconditional surrender. It was at this point that I realised that I was playing against "serious" players (read unscrupulous bastards). If it were me I'd have attacked me first, and let Drunky have his harmless fun. I do take Starcraft reasonably seriously, but not to the point of being a total swine. I often give ultra-newbies a soft game which, although I win, doesn't involve me wiping them out within 10 minutes. (More like an hour or two). I also set up dummy bases with so-so-ish defence and lecture them on better attack methods should their offensive fail.

Getting back to the main point however, I eventually lost this game after about another half hour, but this was not too bad. I wiped out many times more troops than my enemies combined could and even mounted a successful assault on one of them, which would have killed them had my last building not been found and destroyed. I do however resent the loss on my record, as if I had a decent team mate, or even if the others had let Drunky live to be a mild distraction, I believe I could have won. Realistically I was annoyed at Drunky. He should have told me first. I would have given him a game worth having.

Beast Jstbeast
Internet

Alcohol and possibly even substance abuse whilst gaming! Unbelievable! Who would have thought the gaming experience could be enhanced by such a blatantly irresponsible indulgence! This poor fool sacrificed many a noble fighting unit - and for what?! It's indicative, I tell you! Indicative! Games have always been at the forefront of social revolution, and the way things are heading, well, it's just one more important thing to worry about... Stay frosty soldier, think of it as chemical warfare...

Just say yes

I am getting really tired of people putting down PC game players as nerds, geeks, nigels and other things with no damn social

life whatsoever. Don't you know that geekiness is cool these days? Anyway, you never hear this argument against console players, like Michael Klim or any other 'cool' kid at school who has the latest N64 game? Why the PC? Is it because we PC people are smart enough to buy something we can upgrade easily to become the ultimate gaming beast, therefore kicking the ass of console graphics and becoming much more worth the money? Is it because at least our gaming beasts can do other things like graphic programs (I am a graphic designer by trade)?

I like consoles, console games are fun. But they tire easily because they have no staying power like PC games. On a console, you can't buy a Voodoo2 and drool over the massive changes in an old game (old being end of last year). You can't upgrade your PC and scream in terror as Unreal is played at the speed it is meant to be.

And yes we PC 'Nigels' have lives! Of course we do. We just know how to use our time effectively. Our computers are extremely important, and thus hold a massive space in our lives. I enjoy going out, have a partner, eat out, watch movies regularly (over 25 last year!). But I also enjoy pushing my PC to the limits and staying up to ungodly hours playing games!!! It's an obsession to push the PC and myself to the limits. It's fun...it's a drug. To all the people who think I have no life...screw you!!! At least I know how to use my time effectively!

Chai lim
Internet

PCPP's non-schlitz policy pays off!

I think your magazine is great for two reasons 1) it speaks Australian - it isn't schlitz like US or UK mags and 2) it's priced Australian - it doesn't cost \$20 like US or UK magazines when our dollar goes down the tubes.

Scott Mitchell
Internet

Thanks Scott, it's nice to see that someone has finally picked up on our non-schlitz style. In fact, on the PowerPlay Wall of Motivational and Inspirational Truisms is a sign that reads "It's the economy non-schlitz, stupid!"

COMPETITIONS

MICROSOFT'S MOTOCROSS MADNESS & CRUSTY DEMONS OF DIRT VIDEO



Doing stupid things on Motocross bikes has never been as much fun as with Microsoft's amazingly cool game - the best part is that you can do incredibly insane jumps without risking life and limb, though you will have to bear mirth and derision from onlookers, and we've got 6 copies to give away. But just in case you were thinking that nobody would be silly enough to try Motocross Madness manoeuvres in real life, we've also got 6 Crusty Demons Of Dirt videos to give away as well. It was the Crusty series that inspired the game, and once you see them you'll understand why. These guys are really stupid, even for Americans.

Q: Who was 'Australia's own Evel Knievel', and how did he die?

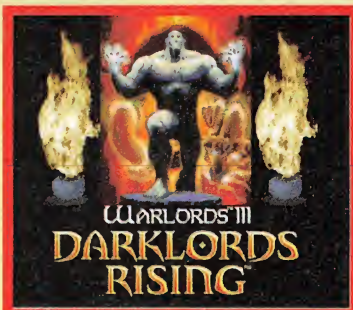
WARLORDS 3

We liked this so much

it only missed out on a gold award by a measly single percentage point. It's another great release from Australian maestros SSG,

and contains both the original Warlords III game plus what is essentially a sequel rather than an expansion pack. 4 entire new campaigns and the bonus of some slightly improved AI to boot. If you haven't become enmeshed in the world of Warlords yet, it's time you did, and if you're already a Warlords fan, then you'll understand why it's so important to send us the answer to this question, cos we've got six copies to give away with thanks to Wolf Interactive.

Q: What was the name of the dragon in 'The Hobbit'?



COLIN McRAE RALLY

Oooh it's good. TOCA was great, and Colin McRae is just as good, except this time it's rally driving. The world has needed a great rally sim for a long long time, and finally the wait is over. All the thrills and spills of the real thing, incredibly realistic car physics, and authentic simulations of the cars involved. Top stuff indeed. You don't believe us? Fine! Simply send us the answer to the question below and if you're feeling lucky, punk, we'll send you a copy of the game as well as a way cool Colin McRae analogue watch for the first winner drawn. Thanks to the lovely Kym at Ozisoft we've got six packs to give away.

Q: Who is Colin McRae's navigator?

WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope.

All entries close October 23, 1998

Entries to:

PC PowerPlay,

78 Renwick st.

Redfern NSW 2016

Issue # 28 winners

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Q: Which film featured the line "I love the smell of Napalm in the morning"

A: Apocalypse Now

M. Breedon; Morningside, Vic

G. Johnston; Toowoomba, Qld

J. Williams; Yepoon, Qld

J. Fell; East Keilor, Vic

M. Potts; Jesmond, NSW

L. Janke; Yeerongpilly, Qld

INTERNATIONAL CRICKET CAPTAIN

Q: Which ex-English captain has professed his love of wearing women's clothes?

A: Mike Brearley

D. Sullivan; Weston, NSW

A. Mc Grath; Mooloolaba, Qld

M. Jelouji; Plympton, S.A.

A. Haines; Mt Gambier, S.A.

W. Oliver; Darwin, N.T.

D. Binny; Granton, Tas

DUNE 2000

Q: What is the name of the Fremen weapon which is carved from the tooth of a sandworm?

A: Crysknife

P. Kirwan; Diamond Creek, Vic.

D. Williams; Modbury Nth, S.A.

S. Southern; Rockingham City, W.A.

K. Behringer; Bunbury, W.A.

J. Francuz; Carlingford, NSW

J. Harrison; Blackmans Bay, Tas

TEAM APACHE

Q: What's the name of the emergency procedure a pilot would use to land a helicopter that had lost engine power?

A: Autorotation: the action of the blades slows the descent of the helicopter almost like the action of a parachute, resulting in up to 7g's deceleration on landing if the pitch of the blades is timed correctly.

R. Carpoletto; Greensborough, Vic

S. Edwards; Beaconsfield, Qld

M. Duncan; Wynn Vale, S.A.

R. Webb; Bambira, NSW

C. Ide; Athelstone, S.A.

A. Fogarty; Kincumber, NSW

DUNE

A game with an identity crisis, Dune was weird yet wonderful

Developer:
Westwood Studios
Year: 1992
Reqs: 286, 640k
RAM, DOS3

Dune was released back in 1992, and it had one major thing going against the grain. It was a movie/book tie-in. Actually, it was modelled on the movie first, which was in turn an interpretation of Frank Herbert's masterpiece series: Dune. Usually, tie-ins are scorned because they assume prior knowledge of the movie or book, and suffer in development due to lack of resources (and effort, thanks to spending big money on copyright licenses). The end result, by the natural progression of things, is often a very watered down affair.

Dune was different though. If this has any connection to its cre-

ation by a French development team, Cryo Interactive, no one can be certain. One thing's for sure, Europeans handle the art of story telling in an entirely different manner. I had never read Dune, nor had I seen the film. And as the game unfolded, I was never quite sure exactly what style of game I was playing.

Using the first person perspective, with a static screen by static screen method of movement, Dune initially played like an adventure game. As the son of a Duke sent to the barren planet of Dune to mine a precious spice called Melange, you spent much of the early parts of the game getting to know your surroundings, and more importantly, finding out exactly what part you played in the whole affair. After suggestions from certain people (through conversation), you are led to the desert (which makes up most of Dune's landscape) in search of answers (and eventually more questions). After meeting with a seemingly small tribe of desert dwellers, and rallying them, you find ways of mining the spice for the Emperor's pleasure (who also sets production goals and due dates that must be kept). Once a method is reached, and production demands are met, you find attacks by the planet's other inhabitants, the Harkonnens, become common place. Now you have to worry about defence, as well as greater demands on spice production.



A story as rich as Dune provides huge potential for game designers

Things seem to become out of hand, till you start discovering mental powers that as mastered, help you greatly in your duty to the Emperor. These powers also help you to uncover the greater problems facing Dune and your goals. Objectives and affiliations change. The gaming experience changes. You become tied to the land and the people, and rally to fight the oppression and corruption you once helped to thrive.

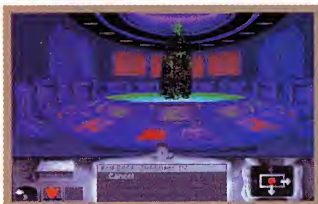
Dune mixed gameplay styles to great success. This was only possible thanks to the brilliant storyline tying it all together. Needless to say, I soon after purchased the book, saw the film, and fell in love

with the many interpretations of this sci-fi masterpiece.

The other thing to Dune's credit: in my mind, it was the mother of the RTS genre that's taken the gaming world by storm. Dune 2 may have been the first obvious incarnation of the genre, but it needed to turn somewhere for its inspiration. You don't have to look further than the prequel, Dune.

Part adventure, part strategy, and part story-book, hunt down this game to see where the RTS evolved from, and more importantly, to see how true classics stand the test of time.

March Stepnik





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